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Early Days of the C.P.G.B.

Lissitsky

The Art of the Book

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The American aggression in Vietnam is intensified day by day. The resistance of the Vietnamese has not only held out against this aggression, it has also become an example and an inspiration for those who are exploited by imperialism throughout the world. Their struggle is therefore our struggle. Clearly, in the long run, it is the destruction of capitalism in its homelands which is the main task of socialists in the advanced capitalist countries, and it is this which would radically alter the isolation of those at present in the front line. But, in the short run, there is a real problem of what forms solidarity with the Vietnamese can take. It is clear that what already has, and is being done, especially by the radical movement in the United States itself—by demonstrations, aid-committees, resistance to the draft—is seen by the Vietnamese as extremely important to them. A further dimension to the opposition to the American occupation of Vietnam was recently provided by the setting up of an International War Crimes Tribunal, on the initiative of Bertrand Russell. It is to be hoped that this tribunal will do much to publicize the character of the occupation, and to stir public opinion as yet uncommitted against it, and that in so doing it will assist the efforts of all those forces which are fighting for American withdrawal. We open this issue of NLR with an interview with Jean-Paul Sartre, the executive president of the Tribunal in which he answers questions concerning its aims and scope. His answers do not only deal with the important issues raised by the conception of the Tribunal itself, they also cover a wide range of problems, from the relation between morality and class politics to the nature of the Gaullist regime.

Since about 1930, the great majority of original and substantial theoretical contributions to Marxism, at least as far as Europe is concerned, have stressed the Hegelian influence on Marx and the importance of his Early Writings, and have—with the major exception of Gramsci—been made by individuals outside the communist parties. Now a prominent member of the French Communist Party, Louis Althusser, has published

two books—*Pour Marx*, and *Lire le Capital*—which are deliberately and indeed polemically anti-Hegelian, which aim to show the immaturity of the Early Writings, and which are at the same time written with a rigour and a brilliance which contrasts sharply with much of what has passed for 'orthodox' Marxism in the past. Louis Althusser, a philosopher who is vice-director of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, has had an enormous impact on the French intellectual left in the last two or three years, and already has a large number of disciples. Since his work invests a number of crucial areas and problems of concern to socialist theory, we felt it important to make available in English a representative example of his work. The main article in this issue of NLR is therefore Althusser's key essay from *Pour Marx*: 'Contradiction and Over-determination'.

One of the great gaps in labour historiography in Britain has been the lack of any adequate account of the development of the British Communist Party. The absence of any serious work of this nature has greatly hampered analysis of much of the political and social history of this country in the last forty years, and has obscured many of the lessons that can be drawn from that history. An examination of the early years of the Communist Party raises many important issues; among others: the role of working-class militants, the original composition of the party, its size, the presence or absence of intellectuals within it, the theoretical context in which it emerged, the type of leadership it enjoyed, and its relationship with other working class organizations. Recently L. J. Macfarlane published a history of the Communist Party up to 1929 which does deal with these issues, and which is by far the best history of the party in its early years yet to have appeared. Monty Johnstone here examines critically Macfarlane's theses, the virtues and vices of his approach, and indicates some questions concerning the character and history of the Communist Party which still remain unanswered.

Lastly, we follow up the Jakobson-Tynyanov Theses on Formalism published in NLR 37 with El Lissitzky's thoughts about the Book. The acolytes of Marshall McLuhan would do well to go back forty years to read this profound and prophetic manifesto.

*Interview with Jean Paul Sartre on the
War Crimes Tribunal*

Imperialist Morality

It has been said that Bertrand Russell's tribunal would only be able to deliver a parody of justice. It is made up of committed individuals, hostile to American policies, their verdict, it is said, known in advance. According to an English journalist, 'It will be like in Alice in Wonderland: there will be the sentence first, and the trial afterwards'.

J. P. Sartre. Let me outline the purpose, and the limits of our tribunal. There is no question of judging whether American policy in Vietnam is evil—of which most of us have not the slightest doubt—but of seeing whether it falls within the compass of international law on war crimes. There would be no point in condemning, in a legal sense, the onslaught of American imperialism against the countries of the Third World which attempt to escape its domination. That struggle is in fact merely the transposition, on an international level, of the class struggle, and is determined by the structure of the groups engaged in it.

Imperialist policy is a necessary historical reality. By this fact it is beyond the reach of any legal or moral condemnation. The only thing possible is to combat it; intellectually by revealing its inner mechanism, politically by attempting to disengage oneself from it (the French government, contrary to appearances, does not really attempt this), or by armed struggle. I admit that I am, like other members of the 'tribunal', a declared enemy of imperialism and that I feel myself in solidarity with all those who fight against it. Commitment, from this point of view, must be total. Each individual sees the totality of the struggle and aligns himself on one side or on the other, from motives which may range from his objective situation to a certain idea that he holds of human life. On this level one may *bate* the class enemy. But one cannot judge him in the legal sense. It is even difficult, if not impossible, so long as one keeps to the purely realistic viewpoint of the class struggle, to see one's own allies in legal terms and rigorously to define the 'crimes' committed by their governments. This was clearly shown by the problem of the Stalinist labour camps. One either delivered moral judgments on them, which were entirely beside the point, or satisfied oneself with evaluating the 'positive' and the 'negative' in Stalin's policies. Some said, 'It's positive in the last analysis' and others said, 'It's negative'. That too led nowhere.

In fact, though the development of history is not determined by law and morality—which are, on the contrary, its products—these two superstructures do exert a 'feed back' effect on that development. It is this which allows one to judge a society in terms of the criteria which it has itself established. It is therefore entirely normal to inquire, at any given moment, if such and such an action can really be judged purely in terms of utility and likely outcome, or whether it does not in fact transcend such criteria and come within the scope of an international jurisprudence which has slowly been built up.

Marx, in one of the prefaces to 'Capital', makes a remark to the effect that—We are the last people who can be accused of condemning the bourgeois, since we consider that, conditioned by the process of capital and by the class struggle, their conduct is necessary. But there are moments, all the same, when they exceed the limits.

The whole problem is to know if, today, the imperialists are exceeding the limits.

When Talleyrand says: 'It is worse than a crime, it is a mistake', he sums up very well the way in which political actions have always been considered throughout history. They might be skilful or clumsy, effective or ill-starred; they always escaped legal sanction. There was no such thing as a 'criminal policy'.

And then, at Nuremberg, in 1945, there appeared for the first time the notion of a 'political crime'. It was suspect, certainly, since it consisted in imposing the law of the conqueror upon the conquered. But the condemnation of the leaders of Nazi Germany by the Nuremberg Tribunal only had any meaning at all if it implied that any government which, in the future, committed acts which could be condemned under one

other of the articles of the Nuremberg laws, would be subject to trial by a similar tribunal. Our tribunal today merely proposes to apply to capitalist imperialism its own laws. The arsenal of jurisprudence, moreover, is not limited to the laws of Nuremberg; there was already the Briand-Kellogg pact; and there are the Geneva Convention and other international agreements.

The question in this case is not one of condemning a policy in the name of history, of judging whether it is or is not contrary to the interests of humanity; it is rather a question of saying if it infringes existing laws. For example, you may criticize the present policies of France, you may be totally opposed to them, as I am, but you cannot call them 'criminal'. That would be meaningless. But you could do so during the Algerian war. Torture, the organization of concentration camps, reprisals on the civilian population, executions without trial could all be equated with some of the crimes condemned at Nuremberg. If anybody at the time had set up a tribunal like the one conceived by Bertrand Russell, I would certainly have agreed to take part in it. Because it was not done at that time with reference to France is no reason not to do it today with reference to the United States.

You will be asked by what legal right, since it is the law which you are invoking you are setting yourselves up as judges, which you are not. . .

Quite true. After that, people will say, anybody can judge anything! And then, doesn't the project risk falling on the one side into petit-bourgeois idealism (a number of well-known personalities make a protest in the name of exalted human values) and on the other into fascism, with a vengeance-seeking aspect to it which recalls Arsene Lupin and the whole of fascist literature?

To this I would reply first of all that there is no question of condemning anybody to any *penalty* whatever. Any judgment which cannot be executed is evidently derisory. I can hardly see myself condemning President Johnson to death. I would cover myself with ridicule.

Our aim is a different one. It is to study all the existing documentation on the war in Vietnam, to bring forward all the possible witnesses—American and Vietnamese—and to determine whether certain actions fall within the competence of the laws of which I have spoken. We will not invent any new legislation. We will merely say, if we establish it,—and I cannot prejudge this—'Such and such acts, committed in such and such places, represent a violation of such and such international laws, and are, consequently, crimes. And there stand those who are responsible for them.' This would, if a real international tribunal existed, make the latter subject—by virtue, for example, of the laws applied at Nuremberg—to various sanctions. So it is not at all a question of demonstrating the indignant disapproval of a group of honest citizens, but of giving a juridical dimension to acts of international politics, in order to combat the tendency of the majority of people only, to judge the conduct of a social group or of a government in expedient or in moral terms.

Does this not lead you to the view that there is a way of waging war which is to be condemned, and another which is not?

Certainly not! The onslaught of imperialism against certain peoples of the third world is a fact which is clear to me. I oppose it with all my strength, to the limit of the feeble means at my disposal, but there is no point in my saying whether there is a good and a bad way in which it can be carried out. In fact, although the good, peaceful people in our consumer societies would like to ignore it, everywhere there is fighting, struggle; the world is in flames and we could have a world war from one moment to the next. I have to take sides in the struggle, not to humanize it. We only have to try and find out whether, in the course of this struggle, there are people who are exceeding the limits; whether imperialist policies infringe laws formulated by imperialism itself.

You might of course ask whether it is possible to fight an imperialist war of repression without violating international laws. But that is not our business. As an ordinary citizen, as a philosopher, as a Marxist, I have the right to believe that that type of war always leads to the use of torture, to the creation of concentration camps, and so on. As a member of the Bertrand Russell Tribunal, that does not interest me. I only have to try to discover whether laws have been violated, in order to reintroduce the legal notion of international crime.

We must ask ourselves whether the views, correct ones, which we hold about politics—(that politics must be considered realistically, that they are determined by a relation of forces, that the end pursued must be taken into account)—must necessarily lead us, as they did many people during the Stalin period, to consider politics solely from the angle of expediency, and to indulge in passive complicity by only judging a government's actions from a practical perspective. Does a political fact not also possess an ethico-judicial structure?

On this ground, our judgments cannot be given in advance, even if we are committed, as individuals, in the struggle against imperialism. Again, I oppose the de Gaulle government with my vote but it would never enter my head to say that Gaullist policies were criminal. One might talk indignantly of 'the crime' of the Ben Barka affair, but I do not see what law we would apply if we wanted to condemn the French government for its role in it. It is entirely different when it is a question of judging a certain act of war by the Americans in Vietnam, a certain bombardment, a certain military operation ordered at top level. To want to set up a real tribunal and to pronounce sentences would be to act as idealists. But we have the right to meet, as citizens, in order to give renewed strength to the notion of a war crime, by showing that any policy can and must be objectively judged in terms of the legal criteria which exist.

When somebody shouts out in a meeting: 'The war in Vietnam is a crime' we are in the realm of emotion. This war is certainly contrary to the interests of the vast majority of people, but is it *legally* criminal? This is what we will try to determine. We cannot say in advance what our conclusions will be.

Some people will reproach you for not judging the Vietnamese at the same time as the Americans, and will say that war crimes are committed by both sides.

I refuse to place in the same category the actions of an organization of poor peasants, hunted, obliged to maintain an iron discipline in their ranks, and those of an immense army backed up by a highly industrialized country of 200 million inhabitants. And then, it is not the Vietnamese who have invaded America nor who have rained down a deluge of fire upon a foreign people. In the Algerian war, I always refused to place on an equal footing the terrorism by means of bomb which was the only weapon available to the Algerians, and the actions and exactions of a rich army of half a million men occupying the entire country. The same is true in Vietnam.

Can this possibility which will be offered you during the 'trial', of bringing light legal norms which can be applied to the policies of any government, debouch on to wider opposition to American policies in Vietnam?

Of course. But that will only be able to come afterwards. It is on the basis of the results of our inquiry—if it terminates in a condemnation—that it will be possible to organize demonstrations, meetings, marches, signature campaigns. Our first task will be one of education, of information and our hearings will naturally be public.

We have been reproached with petit bourgeois legalism. It is true, and I accept that objection. But who are we trying to convince? The classes who are engaged in the struggle against capitalism and who are already convinced (crimes or no crimes) that it is necessary to fight to the bitter end against imperialism? Or that very broad fringe of the middle class which, at the moment, is undecided? It is the petit bourgeois masses which must today be aroused and shaken, since their alliance with the working class—even from a purely local political point of view—is to be desired. And it is by means of legalism that their eyes can be opened. Besides it is no bad thing either to remind the working class, who too often have been led to think only in terms of immediate effects, that every historical action has an ethico-juridical structure. In the post-Stalin period in which we live, it is very important to try to highlight that structure.

How do you explain the fact that the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam have been more numerous and more vigorous in West Germany, in England, in Italy and in Belgium than in France?

In France, it is true, there does exist a certain impermeability in the consciousness of the petit-bourgeoisie, and even to some extent in that of the working-class. This comes, I believe, from the fact that we are only just emerging from a long period of colonial wars. For a very long time we were 'blocked' on all problems of world importance—particularly those of the Third World—because we were the oppressors in Indo-China, and then in Algeria. It was an epoch, you will recall, in which the whole world was becoming anxious about the development of nuclear weapons. The French, for their part, never gave it a thought. They never understood that their country, which harboured America

bases on its territory, would be annihilated just like other countries in case of nuclear war. They never understood it because their attention was continuously engaged by colonial problems.

There is another reason for French apathy—the confusion which de Gaulle succeeds in creating when he passes off as a genuine anti-imperialist policy what is, in fact, a purely verbal affirmation of independence. The Phnom-Pehn speech was only fine words since de Gaulle, while condemning American policies, does not give himself within France the economic means of escaping American tutelage.

But the fact that de Gaulle is the only head of a capitalist state who denounces the policies of the United States gives the French a good conscience. The same citizen who, hostile to Algerian independence, was still only too happy that a venerated leader should put an end to a war impossible to win, is today very pleased that the definitive words of the great man, with whom he identifies, should supply a justification for his passivity: 'Since de Gaulle is taking such a firm stand on Vietnam, it is useless for me to do more'.

If the parties of the left were united, they would have to discover through experience that the Gaullist ambition to make France into a serious adversary of American imperialism has no meaning, since it is not based on an internal policy capable of genuinely freeing us from the grasp of the Americans.

Today France is nothing but a rebellious slave, still subject to American authority. The headquarters of Nato will have to set itself up somewhere else, maybe, but the Americans can put French workers out of work where and when they wish; they can paralyse our economy merely by withdrawing their computers; they can exert enormous pressure against which we are defenceless.

The first point of a left programme would have to be the need to combat, by means of a policy of priority investments—a great proportion of them public ones—the invasion of American capital. It would be very difficult, I know, and France could not do it alone. She would have to make use of the Common Market and to be able to induce her partners to adopt the same policy. They too, for the moment, are dominated by American economic power; but certain countries—Italy, for instance—could be brought to revise their attitude if France practised a policy of genuine economic independence.

For the moment, we are still waiting for the left to unite. And I do not see any bridging over of the gulf between the upholders and the opponents of the Atlantic Pact. The problem is partly concealed because the communists have made some concessions for the elections; but it remains posed and continues to paralyse the left. We had a perfect example of this when Guy Mollet, last spring, wanted to put down a motion of censure directed against the government's foreign policy. The communists were embarrassed because certain aspects of the policy suited them, and they said: 'Let us condemn instead the govern-

ment's policies as a whole, showing that it is no more satisfactory at home than abroad.' Guy Mollet refused.

In my opinion, opposition to the Atlantic Pact ought to be the main criterion of a left policy. I would even say that the only point in common between the abstract position of de Gaulle and what ought to be the attitude of the left, is the demand for national sovereignty. Sovereignty must be won back, not in order to defend it jealously—would be possible to associate with other similarly sovereign countries and to set up international organizations to which certain powers could be surrendered—but in order to oppose it to American imperialism which is everywhere breaking down national structures.

Let us suppose that the left was united: what could it do in effective terms about Vietnam?

It could in the first place mobilize public opinion. It is not easy, but there are some countries where it has been achieved. In France, a strike of any size, unleashed in connection with economic objectives, but whose real motive was opposition to American policy in Vietnam, is inconceivable. In Japan—where I was recently—there was, on 11 October 21st, a general strike 'against American imperialism'. I don't say that it was a total success, but it took place.

The French too, of course, are 'against' the Vietnam war, but they don't feel it concerns them. They don't realize that they are in danger of being dragged into a world conflict by the development of a struggle which serves the interests of the Americans alone. De Gaulle, for his part, does realize this. I was very struck by the reaction of the Japanese to his Phnom-Penh speech. They said: 'De Gaulle was afraid.' This meant that he had suddenly come to appreciate the danger of seeing his country destroyed for something which does not concern her. It was in fact, a speech dictated by fear, and from that point of view a good speech. But a simple cry of alarm is of no great use.

We must visualize our struggle, today, in the context of a durable American hegemony. The world is not dominated by two great powers but by one. Peaceful coexistence, despite its very positive aspects, serves the interests of the United States. It is thanks to peaceful coexistence and to the Sino-Soviet conflict—the latter resulting to a great extent from the former—that the Americans are able to bomb Vietnam undisturbed. The socialist camp has, unquestionably, suffered a reversal as a result of the rivalries and of the policies set in motion by Khrushchev. So much so that the Americans today feel that they have a free hand, to the point where President Johnson hinted in a recent speech that he would not permit the Chinese to develop their nuclear strength beyond a certain point. This horrifying and cynical threat could not have been made if Johnson had been certain that the USSR would continue to China's assistance.

This present hegemony of the United States does not, however, exclude a certain vulnerability. In default of a direct confrontation with the socialist camp—too seriously divided—the solution could come from

the weariness of the mass of Americans and from the disquiet of Washington's leaders at the growing disapproval of the entire world, and in particular of all their allies.

Do you think that actions like that of David Mitchell, the young American who refused to serve in Vietnam, invoking the Nuremberg laws, could contribute to a prise de conscience on the part of the Americans?

It is precisely from the action of David Mitchell and of others that the idea of our tribunal sprang. Our inquiry, if it concludes that the United States is guilty, should allow all the young who are combating Johnson's policy to invoke, not only the laws of Nuremberg but also the judgment of a number of free men who do not represent any power, or any party. It is much better that we do not represent anything. For the neo-Nazis, the Nuremberg decisions were invalid because they were delivered by victors whose law was founded on their power. We, on the contrary, hold no mandate from any power whatsoever, and nobody will be able to say that we impose our law on people whom we hold beneath our boot. We are independent because we are weak. And our position is strong because we do not seek to send a few individuals to prison, but to reawaken in public opinion, at an ominous moment of our history, the idea that there can be policies which are objectively and legally criminal.

J. H. Plumb

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MACMILLAN

Presentation of Althusse

In the first half of the 20th century Marxist theory was dominated by two orthodoxies: before 1914 by the Kautskyism of the Second International, and from 1920 to 1950 by Bolshevism, the theory of the Third International. The collapse of Kautskyism was due to the SPD's collapse into chauvinism on the outbreak of War, and the rise of Bolshevism to the October Revolution and the establishment and consolidation of the USSR. But the revolutionary upheaval of 1917 did not affect Russia alone; as a crisis of Imperialism, its effects were felt more or less in every European country. The Western revolutionary movements also sought for a replacement for the discredited Second International theory—a theory discredited not only by its association with the SPD but also by its failure to comprehend the events of the years immediately following the War. The theory of the inevitable development of the contradictions of capitalism to its collapse was replaced by a theory of the proletariat as the subject of the revolutionary transformation of society. The most notable theorists of this group were Lukács and Gramsci, and their position took the form of an attack on positivism and determinism and hence of renewed stress on Marx's close relationship to Hegel. The trend was enormously reinforced by the publication of Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts* in 1932, since when it has concentrated largely on an exposition of Marx's early works. Marcuse and Henri Lefebvre are representative of this emphasis. Within this 'Western Marxism' there are, naturally, considerable variations, so that Gramsci, for example, can be seen as prefiguring later developments (see below, nn. 23 & 29). Bolshevism was always distinct from this tendency (although the latter's proponents usually proclaimed their Leninism), and in the '30's, when Bolshevism sclerosed into Stalinist dogmatism, the two were in clear opposition. But, curiously, the crude practicality of Stalinism and the philosophical sophistication of Western Marxism formed a viable opposition, until the death of Stalin and the thaw weakened the Bolshevik orthodoxy and this stable opposition crumbled. Western Marxism assumed the revolutionary proletariat as an epistemological basis; the absence of this basis was never theoretically resolved, and its practical consequence was political ambiguity. The SPD published Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts* as a weapon against the Communists; Lukács and Korsch took directly opposite stands with relation to Comintern policy; in this country since the Second World War it has been Trotskyists who have

shown most interest in the Western tradition. In the '50's, and increasingly since 1956, a diluted form of the Western theory—so-called 'Marxist humanism'—has become something close to an orthodoxy for the revisionist wings of Western Communist Parties. Some new response to the growing eclecticism of the once persecuted Western Marxism was inevitable.

It emerged first in Italy with the work of Della Volpe and Colletti, particularly the former's *Romism & Marx* (1956), and then in France, firstly as a restatement of Bolshevism in Auguste Cornu's biographical studies of Marx and Engels, and recently as a radically new approach in the work of Louis Althusser and his disciples.

Of course, theoretical trends cannot be understood merely in terms of their relation to political history. The Hegelian emphasis of Lukács and Gramsci was a consequence of the re-emergence of Hegelianism in the early 20th century as a development of neo-Kantianism and in the work of Croce respectively. Althusser's work also has a clear pedigree outside the realms of Marxist theory. His primary concern is a close reading of Marx's works, particularly the later works (from *The Poverty of Philosophy* to *Capital*). But he also makes use of insights from more recent developments in non-Marxist thought; as he himself says of the collection he is editing for François Maspéro: 'The THEORY Collection wishes to take into account the *actual* meeting taking place before our eyes of the conceptual elaboration of the philosophical principles contained in the discovery of Marx on the one hand, and on the other of certain works in epistemology, in the history of ideology, knowledge and scientific research.' (*Theory* Collection, end-papers). Among the former are the works of related Marxists, e.g. Maurice Godelier, and among the latter it is worth naming the formalist aesthetics of the Russian school of the '20's (including Eichenbaum, Jakobson and Tynyanov), structuralist linguistics, Michel Foucault's histories of ideas, and Jacques Lacan's linguistic psychoanalysis. Beyond these direct sources lie the phenomenology of the younger Husserl, Freud's psychoanalytic theory and echoes of Spinoza.

Presenting these 'influences' as a list of names does less than justice to the rigour of Althusser's position; he is in reaction against the eclecticism of the various forms of neo-Marxism current since the mid-50's. The major focus of his research has been on the development of the 'theoretical problematic'; a discussion of 'the fact characterizing the very existence of science: that it can only pose questions on the terrain and within the horizons of a definite theoretical structure—its problematic—which constitutes the absolutely defined condition of possibility, and thus the absolute determination of the form in which any problem can be posed at a given moment in science' (*Lire la Capital*, vol I, p.27). Nicos Poulantzas has analyzed Althusser's own work in terms of the contemporary problematic illustrated by the debate between Sartre and Lévi-Strauss on history (*Les Temps Modernes* 240, May 1966).

The essay we present here is one of the earliest written of Althusser's works, and this aspect of his research is no more than implicit in it. He has himself defined the place of this essay in his general conception:

inally . . . identified a pertinent absence in the term "Marx's 'inversion' of the Hegelian dialectic": the absence of its concept and therefore of its problem. I laboriously reconstituted this problem by showing that the real content of the "inversion" which Marx discussed was a revolution in the problematic' (*Lire la Capital*, vol. I, p. 32 n. 10). Althusser has defined his overall project as a theory of the production of knowledge, and its necessary parts as 'a theory of the structure of theoretical practice as opposed to other practices; a theory of the history of the production of knowledge as opposed to other forms of history; and a theory of the structure and of the history of the non theoretical practices on which theoretical practice is articulated' (*Theoria* Collection, end-papers). This essay represents the third of these alternatives: it is a discussion of the theory of history within a discussion of different interpretations of Marx's relation to Hegel.

This last topic is on well-worn territory, but Althusser is unusual in approaching it from a study of Feuerbach rather than of Hegel. He points out that the distinction Marxist humanists usually draw between Marx and Hegel is no more than the difference between Feuerbach and Hegel. The Marxist humanist thesis is that Marx's later work is a direct development and application of the writings of the period 1843-45 (especially the *Manuscripts* of 1844), but if these writings are essentially Feuerbachian, and, as we know, Marx later rejected Feuerbach, his writings after 1845 cannot be consistent with the earlier works. Althusser proposes a radical break with the earlier humanism in 1846-47, a '*coupsure épistémologique*' and a '*changement d'élément*' (Marx himself writes of a 'change of terrain'). That this change is expressed in the same language before and after is the price paid by the theoretical pioneer; new concepts are inevitably expressed with the old language. The confusion of the humanists is due to a superficial reading of the later works. This is the position reached in the article referred to in the first sentence of *Contradiction and Overdetermination*.

Marx points out that Feuerbach's attempt to invert Hegel by placing the essence of man in materiality rather than consciousness merely recreated the idealist problematic with changed terms. Althusser therefore concentrates on Marx's claim that he had merely 'inverted' Hegel and sets out to discover the difference in conception implied. The 'mirror-image' relation of Feuerbach and Hegel means that both use the same essential concepts of totality and contradiction. Marx uses the same words, but the concepts themselves changed. The essay that follows is an attempt to redefine the words as Marx used them in his later work.

Although he claims that the theory Marx utilized in *Capital* has never been isolated, Althusser does not deny that the same theory has been used by the Marxist movement in theory and practice. So in this case he takes Lenin's analysis of the reasons for the success of the 1917 Revolution in Russia as an example of Marxist analysis in which to discover (to 'produce') the Marxist theory employed. For Hegelian theory the Russian Revolution has always been a cruel paradox, only explicable as an enormous 'exception' to the Laws of History. If the

central contradiction of capitalism is that how could the Revolution take place where capitalism has established itself while fully capitalist states were merely passing. This is explicable in terms of the accumulation of secondary contradictions in Russia, but such an explanation demands a radical change of the conception of these secondary contradictions. They can no longer be phenomenal alienations of the ongoing central contradiction, but must have their own autonomous influence on the system as a whole. But Marxism is no mere empiricism of contradictions, analyzing each specific phenomenon in terms of whatever contradictions seem most relevant; there is in Marxism a conception of the totality, of an ensemble that is also asymmetrical, dominated by one of its elements. This autonomy and interdependence of the various contradictions is expressed by Althusser in the concept of 'overdetermination'. Freud used this term to denote how a single element of behaviour expresses a complex motivation—e.g. a single dream image expresses several unconscious desires. Althusser uses it similarly to denote the complexity of any contradiction, a complexity due to 'the influence of a structure on its effects'. The particular relation of the over-determined contradictions in any situation determines the possibility of a revolutionary change in the structure. It follows that the totality itself is quite distinct from the Hegelian totality. This difference Althusser expresses in later writings in the definition of the totality as a structure in the domination of the economy in the last instance (*structure à dominante en dernière instance de l'économie*).

Many socialists in England are still defending Marxist humanism against Stalinist dogmatism, without realizing that this battle is largely won; it has been reduced to a conflict with bourgeois distortion of Marx, and even this is fast disappearing to give place to a bourgeois critique of Communism based on the work of the younger Marx. To bring Marxist theory into line with contemporary conditions a completely new conception is needed. Althusser's work represents one approach to such a scientific Marxism.

A note on the translation. Frequent use has been made of the word 'sublation' as a translation for the French 'dépassement', which is itself a translation of the German 'Aufhebung'. The latter is usually translated into English as 'transcendence' (e.g. in recent translations of Hegel), or by a variety of terms (Bottomore and Milligan use 'annul', 'abolish' and 'supersede', as well as 'transcend'). On the other hand, translations of French phenomenology and existentialism use 'surpass' (Hazel Barnes in her translations of Sartre) or even the transliteration 'depass' (Laing and Cooper). As is well known, this confusion is a consequence of the untranslatable ambiguity of the German 'Aufhebung', which means both 'suppression' and 'raising up'. Older translations of Hegel used the term 'sublation' as it is etymologically a (Latinized) equivalent of the German. And in the English translation of a text to which Althusser refers frequently in this essay, Engels' *Leading Feuerbach*, the word 'sublation' is used, in a context essentially similar to that in which it appears in the essay: '... so powerful a work as Hegelian philosophy ... could not be disposed of by simply being ignored. It had to be "sublated" in its own sense, that is, in the sense that while its form had to be annihilated through criticism, the new content which had been won through it had to be saved.' (op. cit., II 368) As there is no way of avoiding the confusion already produced, it seemed worthwhile to preserve this reference by translating 'dépasser' throughout as 'sublate'.

Contradiction and overdetermination

In an article devoted to the Young Marx¹, I have already stressed the ambiguity of the idea of 'inverting Hegel'. It seemed to me that strictly speaking this expression suited Feuerbach perfectly; the latter did, indeed, 'turn speculative philosophy back onto its feet', but the only result was to arrive with implacable logic at an idealist *anthropology*. But the expression cannot be applied to Marx, at least not to the Marx who had grown out of this 'anthropological' phase. I could go further, and suggest that in the well-known passage: 'With (Hegel) (the dialectic) is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell'², this 'turning right side up again' is merely gestural, even metaphorical, and it raises as many questions as it answers.

How should we really understand its use in this quotation? It is no longer a matter of a general 'inversion' of Hegel, i.e. the inversion of speculative philosophy as such. From *The German Ideology* onwards we know that such an undertaking would be meaningless. Anyone who claims purely and simply to have inverted speculative philosophy (to derive, for example, materialism) can never be more than philosophy's Proudhon, its unconscious prisoner, just as Proudhon was the prisoner of bourgeois economics. We are now concerned with the *dialectic*, and the dialectic alone. It might be thought that when Marx writes that we must 'discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell' he means that the 'rational kernel' is the dialectic itself, while the 'mystical shell' is speculative philosophy. Engels, time-honoured distinction between *method* and *system* implies precisely this.³ The shell, the mystical wrapping (speculative philosophy), should be tossed aside and the precious kernel, the dialectic, retained. But in the same sentence Marx claims that this shelling of the kernel and the inversion of the dialectic are one and the same thing. How can an extraction be an inversion? Or in other words, what is 'inverted' during this extraction?

Let us look a little closer. As soon as the dialectic is removed from its idealistic shell, it becomes 'the direct opposite of the Hegelian dialectic.' Does this mean that for Marx, far from dealing with Hegel's sublimated, inverted world, it is applied to the real world? This is certainly the sense in which Hegel was 'the first consciously to expose its general

¹ *Sur le Jeune Marx*, in *Pour Marx* (Paris, 1965) pp. 45-83.

² Karl Marx: *Das Kapital*, Post-script to the second edition. This is a literal translation of the German original. Here is a translation of the crucial passages: 'In principle (*der Grundsatz nach*) my dialectical method is not only distinct from Hegel's but its direct opposite. For Hegel, the process of thought, which he goes so far as to turn into an autonomous subject under the name of the Idea, is the demurage of the real, which only represents (*bildet*) its external phenomena. For me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing but the material transposed and translated in man's head. The mystificatory (*mystifizierende*) side of the Hegelian dialectic I criticized about 30 years ago while it was still fashionable . . . I then declared myself openly a disciple of that great thinker, and, in my chapter of the theory of value I went so far as to flirt (*sich hinstellen* . . . *mit*) here and there with his peculiar mode of expression. The mystification the dialectic suffered at Hegel's hands does not remove him from his place as the first to expose (*darstellen*) consciously and in depth its general forms of movement. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again if you would discover the rational kernel (*Kern*) within the mystical shell (*mystische Hülle*).

'In its mystified form the dialectic was a German fashion because it seemed to transfigure the given (*das Bestehende*). In its rational image (*Gestalt*) it is a scandal and abomination for the bourgeoisie . . . As it includes in the understanding of the given (*Bestehende*) the simultaneous understanding of its negation and necessary destruction, as it conceives any mature (*gewordene*) form as in motion and thus equally in its ephemeral aspect it allows nothing to impose on it, and is in essence critical and revolutionary.'

[Althusser here makes several criticisms of French translations of *Das Kapital*, particularly those of Roy and Molitor. These are not applicable to this passage in the English translation by Moore and Aveling (Moscow 1961) except for the use of 'the present' for '*das Bestehende*' (the given)—but elsewhere this translation leaves much to be desired—Translator's note]

³ *Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works* II, 360-402 (2 volume edition).

forms of movement in depth'. We could therefore take his dialectic from him and apply it to life rather than to the Idea. The 'inversion' would then be an 'inversion' of the 'sense' of the dialectic. But such an inversion in sense would in fact leave the dialectic untouched.

The Kernel and the Shell

Taking Young Marx as an example, in the article referred to above, suggested that to take over the dialectic in rigorous Hegelian form could only expose us to dangerous ambiguities, for it is impossible, given the principles of a Marxist interpretation of *any* ideological phenomenon, to conceive of the place of the dialectic in Hegel's system as that of a kernel in a nut.⁴ It is inconceivable that the essence of the dialectic in Hegel's work should not be contaminated by Hegelian ideology, or, since such a 'contamination' presupposes the fiction of pure pre-'contamination' dialectic, that the Hegelian dialectic could cease to be Hegelian and become Marxist by a simple, miraculous 'extraction'.

Even in the rapidly written lines of the postscript to the second edition of *Das Kapital* Marx saw this difficulty clearly. By the accumulation of metaphors, he not only hints at something more than he says but elsewhere he puts it clearly enough, though our translators have half sneaked it away.

A close reading of the German text shows clearly enough that the *mystical shell* is by no means (as some of Engels' later commentaries would lead one to think)⁵ speculative philosophy, or its 'work

⁴ On the kernel, see Hegel: Introduction to the *Philosophy of History*, Great men 'must be named heroes in so far as they have drawn their goals and vocations not only from the tranquil ordered stream of events sanctioned by the reigning system but from a source whose content is hidden and has not yet attained actual existence in the still subterranean internal spirit which knocks for admittance to the external world and breaks its way in, because it is not the almond which suits this kernel.' A curious variation on the long history of the kernel, the pulp and the almond. Here the kernel plays the part of an egg-shell containing the almond; the kernel is outside and the almond inside. The almond (the new principle) finally bursts the old kernel which no longer suits it (it was the kernel of the old almond); it wants a kernel of its own: no political and social forms, etc. This reference should be borne in mind whenever the problem of the Hegelian dialectic of history arises.

⁵ Cf. Engels *Feuerbach*, *op. cit.* Perhaps we should not take too literally all the formulations of a text on the one hand destined for wide popular diffusion, and therefore, Engels himself admits, somewhat schematic, and on the other set down by a man who 40 years previously lived through the great intellectual adventure of the discovery of historical materialism, and himself passed through the philosophical forms of consciousness whose broad history he is writing. The essay does, in fact, contain a noteworthy critique of Feuerbach (Engels sees that for him 'nature as man remains mere words', p. 384) and a good sketch of the relations between Marxism and Hegelianism. For example, Engels demonstrates Hegel's extraordinary critical virtue as compared with Kant (this I think particularly important), and declares that 'in its Hegelian form this (dialectical) method was unusable', p. 38. Further, and basic: the development of philosophy is not philosophical; it was the 'practical necessities of its fight' in religion and politics that forced the neo-Hegelians to oppose Hegel's 'system' (p. 367); it is the progress of science and industry which overturns philosophies (p. 372). Also the recognition of the profound influence Feuerbach on *The Holy Family*, (p. 368), etc. But the same essay contains formulations which, if taken literally, can only lead to dead ends. For example, the theme of 'inversion' is taken so seriously that Engels draws the logical conclusion that 'ult'

conception', or its 'system', i.e. an element we can regard as external to its method, but refers directly to the dialectic itself. Marx goes so far as to talk of 'the mystification the dialectic suffered at Hegel's hands', of its 'mystificatory side', its 'mystified form' (*mystifizierte Form*), and of the rational figure (*rationelle Gestalt*) of his own dialectic. It would be difficult to indicate more clearly that the mystical shell is nothing but the mystified form of the dialectic itself: that is, not a relatively external element of the dialectic (e.g. the 'system') but an *internal* element, *consubstantial with the Hegelian dialectic*. It is not enough, therefore, to disengage it from its *first wrapping* (the system) to free it. It must also be freed from a second, almost inseparable skin, Hegelian in principle. This extraction cannot be painless; in appearance an unpeeling, it is really a *demystification*, an operation transforming what is extracted.

Extraction, Inversion or Structure ?

To conclude, in its approximation, this metaphorical expression—the 'inversion' of the dialectic—does not raise the problem of the nature of the objects to which a single method should be applied (the world of the Idea for Hegel—the real world for Marx), but rather the problem of the *nature of the dialectic* itself, that is, the problem of its *specific structures*; not the problem of the inversion of the 'sense' of the dialectic, but that of the *transformation of its structures*. It is hardly worth pointing out that, in the first case, the application of a method, the exteriority of the dialectic to its possible objects poses a predialectical question, a question without any strict meaning for Marx. The second problem, on the other hand, raises a real question to which it is hardly likely that Marx and his disciples should not have given a concrete answer in theory and practice, in theory or in practice.

Let us say, to end this overextended textual exposition, that if the Marxist dialectic is 'in principle' the opposite of the Hegelian dialectic, if it is rational and not mystical-mystified-mystificatory, this radical distinction must be manifest in its essence, that is, in its determinations and specific structures. To be clear, this means that fundamental structures of the Hegelian dialectic such as negation, the negation of the negation, the identity of opposites, 'sublation',* the transformation of quantity into quality, contradiction, etc. have for Marx (in so far

ately, the Hegelian system represents merely a *materialism* idealistically turned upside down in method and content' (p. 372). If the inversion of Hegel into Marx is well-founded, it follows that Hegel must already have been a previously inverted materialism; two negations make an affirmation. Later (p. 387), we discover that the Hegelian dialectic was unusable in its Hegelian form precisely because it stands on its head (on the idea, not the real): 'Thereby the dialectic of concepts itself became merely the conscious reflex of the dialectical motion of the real world and thus the dialectical of Hegel was placed upon its head; or rather, turned off its head, on which it was standing, and placed upon its feet.' Obvious these are approximate formulations only, but their very approximation indicates a difficulty. Also noteworthy is a singular affirmation of the necessity for all philosophers to construct a system: (Hegel 'was compelled to make a system and, in accordance with traditional requirements, a system of philosophy must conclude with some sort of absolute truth,' p. 363), a necessity which 'springs from an imperishable desire of the human mind—the desire to overcome all contradictions' (p. 365); and another statement that explains the limitations of Feuerbach's materialism by his life in the country and his consequent rustication in isolation (p. 375).

* See the *Presentation*—Translator's note.

as he uses them, and he uses by no means all of them) a structure different from that which they have for Hegel. It also means that these structural differences can be demonstrated, described, determined and thought. And if it is possible, it is therefore necessary, I would go so far as to say vital, for Marxism. We cannot go on reiterating indefinitely approximations such as the difference between system and method, the inversion of philosophy or dialectic, the extraction of the 'rational kernel', etc, and let these formulae think for us, confiding ourselves to the magic of a number of completely devalued words for the understanding of Marx's work. I say vital, for I am convinced that Marxism in its philosophical development is at present hanging back from this task.⁶

The Russian Revolution

As someone must take the first step, I shall brave the perils of a brief discussion of the Marxist concept of contradiction in a particular case: the Leninist thesis of 'the weakest link'.

Lenin gave this metaphor, above all, a practical meaning. A chain is as strong as its weakest link. Anyone who wants to control a given situation will look out for a weak point, in case it should render the whole system vulnerable. On the other hand, anyone who wants to attack it, even if the odds are apparently against him, need only discover this or weakness to make all its power precarious. So far there is nothing new here for the readers of Machiavelli or Vauban, who were as expert in the arts of the defence as of the destruction of a position, and who judged armour by its faults. But this is where we should pay attention if it is obvious that the theory of the weakest link guided Lenin in his theory of the revolutionary party (faultlessly united in consciousness and organization to avoid adverse exposure and to destroy the enemy): it was also the inspiration for his reflections on the revolution itself. How was the revolution possible in Russia, why was it victorious there? It was possible in Russia for a reason which transcended Russia because with the unleashing of imperialist war humanity entered into an *objectively revolutionary* situation.⁷ Imperialism tore off the 'peaceful mask' of the old capitalism. The concentration of industrial monopolies, their subordination to financial monopolies, increased the exploitative

⁶ Mao-Tse-Tung's pamphlet: *On Contradiction* (1937) contains a whole series of analyses in which the Marxist conception of contradiction appears in a quite different Hegelian light. Its essential concepts may be sought in vain in Hegel: principle and secondary contradiction; principle and secondary aspect of the contradictory; antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradiction; law of uneven development of the contradiction. However, Mao's essay, inspired by his struggle against dogmatism in the Chinese Party, remains generally on a descriptive level, and is consequently abstract in certain respects. Descriptive: his concepts correspond to concrete experience. In part abstract: the concepts, though new, and rich in promising implications of the Marxist conception of society and history.

⁷ Lenin: *Farewell Letter to Swiss Workers* (April 8th, 1917) 'It was the objective conditions created by the imperialist war that brought the whole of humanity to an impasse that placed it in a dilemma: either allow the destruction of more millions of life and utterly ruin European civilization, or hand over power in all the civilized countries to the revolutionary proletariat, carry through the socialist revolution.'

of the workers and of the colonies. Competition between the monopolies made the war inevitable. But this same war, which dragged vast masses, even colonial peoples from whom troops were drawn, into limitless suffering, drove its cannon-fodder not only into massacre, but also into history. Everywhere the experience, the horrors of war were confirmation of a whole century's protest against capitalist exploitation; a focusing-point too, for hand in hand with this shattering exposure went the effective means of action. But though this effect was felt throughout the greater part of the European popular masses (revolution in Germany and Hungary, mutinies and mass strikes in France and Italy, the soviets of Turin) *only in Russia*, precisely the 'most backward' country in Europe, *did it produce a triumphant revolution.*

Why this paradoxical exception? For this basic reason: in the 'system of imperialist states'⁸ Russia represented the weakest point. The Great War had, of course, precipitated and aggravated this weakness, but it had not by itself created it. Already, even in defeat, the 1905 Revolution had demonstrated the weakness of Tsarist Russia. This weakness was the product of this special feature: the accumulation and exacerbation of all the historical contradictions then possible: Contradictions of a régime of feudal exploitation at the dawn of the twentieth century, attempting to control as threats to it mounted, with the aid of a deceitful priesthood, an enormous mass of 'ignorant'⁹ peasants (circumstances which dictated a singular association of the peasants' revolt with the workers' revolution):¹⁰ Contradictions of large-scale capitalist and imperialist exploitation in the major cities and their suburbs, in the mining regions, oilfields, etc: Contradictions of colonial exploitation and wars imposed on whole peoples: the gigantic contradiction between the stage of development of capitalist methods of production (particularly in respect to proletarian concentration: the largest factory in the world at the time was the Putilov Works at Petrograd, with 40,000 workers and auxiliaries) and the medieval state of the country. Again, the exacerbation of class struggles in the whole country, not only between exploiter and exploited, but even within the ruling classes themselves (the great feudal proprietors supporting autocratic, militaristic, police Tsarism; the small aristocracy constantly fomenting plots; *baniers bourgeois* and liberal bourgeoisie opposed to the Tsar; the *petits bourgeois* oscillating between conformism and anarchistic 'leftism'). The detailed course of events added other 'exceptional'¹¹ circumstances, incomprehensible outside this 'tangle' of contradictions inside and outside Russia. There was for example, the 'advanced' nature of the Russian revolutionary elite, exiled by Tsarist repression; in exile it became 'cultivated', it absorbed the whole heritage (above all, Marxism) of the political experience of the Western European working classes; this was particularly true of the formation of the Bolshevik Party, far ahead of any Western 'Socialist' party in consciousness and organization.¹² There

⁸ Lenin: *Report of the Central Committee to the 8th Congress of the RCP(B)*, *Collected Works* xxix 153.

⁹ Lenin.

¹⁰ Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile disorder*, *Selected Works* III, 412-35.

¹¹ Lenin: *Our Revolution* in *Selected Works* III, 821.

¹² Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, *Selected Works* III, 379.

was the 'dress rehearsal' for the Revolution in 1905, which, in common with most serious crises, set class relations sharply into relief and made possible the 'discovery' of a new form of mass political organization: *soviets*.¹³ Last, but not least, there was the unexpected 'respite' the exhausted imperialist nations allowed the Bolsheviks for them to make their 'opening' in history, the involuntary but effective support of the Anglo-French bourgeoisie; at the decisive moment, wishing to be rid of the Tsar, they did everything to help the Revolution.¹⁴ In brief, as precisely these details show, the privileged situation of Russia with respect to the possible revolution was a matter of *an accumulation and an exacerbation of historical contradictions* that would have been incomprehensible in any country which was not, as Russia was, at the same time at least a century behind the imperialist world, *and at the highest point of its development*.

The Weakest Link

All this can be found throughout Lenin's work,¹⁵ and Stalin summarized it in particularly clear terms in his speeches of April 1924.¹⁶ The unevenness of capitalist development led, via the 1914-18 war, to the Russian Revolution. In the revolutionary situation facing the whole of humanity Russia was the weakest link in the chain of imperialist states. It had accumulated the largest sum of historical contradictions then possible; for it was at the same time the most backward and the most advanced nation, a gigantic contradiction which its divided ruling classes could neither avoid nor solve. In other words Russia was overdue with its bourgeois revolution at the birth of its proletarian revolution; pregnant with two revolutions, at the birth of the first, it could not withhold the second. This exceptional situation was 'insoluble' (for the ruling classes)¹⁷ and Lenin was correct to see in it the *objective conditions* of a Russian revolution, and to forge its *subjective conditions*, the means of a decisive assault on this weak link in the imperialist chain, in a Communist Party that was a chain without weak links.

What else did Marx and Engels mean when they declared that history always progresses by its bad side?¹⁸ This obviously means the worst side for the rulers, but without stretching its sense unduly we can interpret the bad side as that for those who expect the reverse from history. For example, the German Social-Democrats of the end of the 19th century imagined they would shortly be promoted to socialist triumph by virtue of belonging to the most powerful capitalist state,

¹³ Lenin: *The Third International and its Place in History, Collected Works* xxxix 311.

¹⁴ Lenin: *Report to the Petrograd City Conference of the RSDRP(B), Collected Works* xxxiv 141.

¹⁵ See particularly *Left-Wing Communism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 379: 412, 435-436; 439; 444-445. *The Third International*, *op. cit.*, p. 310. *Our Revolution*, *op. cit.*, pp. 820ff. *Letters from Afar*, No. 1, *Selected Works* 11, 31ff. Lenin's remarkable theory of the conditions for a revolution (*Left-Wing Communism*, pp. 434-435; 444-446) deals thoroughly with the decisive effect of Russia's specific situation.

¹⁶ Stalin: *The Foundations of Leninism, Problems of Leninism* (11th edition) pp. 13-93, particularly pp. 15-18, 29-32, 71-73. Despite their 'pedagogical' dryness, these pieces are in many ways excellent.

¹⁷ Lenin: *Our Revolution*, *op. cit.*, p. 821.

¹⁸ *The Poverty of Philosophy*, p. 121.

then undergoing rapid economic expansion, just as they were undergoing rapid electoral expansion (such coincidences occur). They obviously saw history as progressing through the other side, the 'good' side, the side with the greatest economic development, the greatest growth, with its contradiction reduced to the purest form (that between Capital and Labour), so they forgot that all this was taking place in a Germany armed with a powerful state machine, endowed with a bourgeoisie which had long ago given up 'its' political revolution in exchange for Bismarck's (and later Wilhelm's) military, bureaucratic and police protection, in exchange for the super-profits of capitalist and colonialist exploitation, endowed too with a chauvinist and reactionary petite bourgeoisie. They forgot that, in fact, this simple quintessence of a contradiction was quite simply abstract: the real contradiction was so much one with its 'circumstances' that it was only discernible, identifiable and manipulable *through and with them*.

What is the essence of this practical experience and the reflections it inspired in Lenin? It should be pointed out immediately that this was not Lenin's sole illuminating experience. Before 1917 there was 1905, before 1905 the great historical deceptions of Germany and England, before that the Commune, even earlier the German failure of 1848-49. En route, these experiences provoked more or less direct reflections (Engels: *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany*; Marx: *The Class Struggles in France*; *The Civil War in France*; *The Eighteenth Brumaire*; *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*; Engels: *The Critique of the Erfurt Programme*; etc), and had been related to even earlier revolutionary experience: the bourgeois revolutions of England and France.

Overdetermination

How else should we summarize these practical experiences and their theoretical commentaries other than by saying that the whole Marxist revolutionary experience shows that, if the general contradiction (it has already been specified: the contradiction between forces of production and relations of production, essentially embodied in the contradiction between two antagonistic classes) is sufficient to define the situation when revolution is the order of the day, it cannot of its own simple, direct power provoke a 'revolutionary situation', nor *a fortiori* a situation of revolutionary rupture and triumph of the revolution. If this contradiction is to become 'active' in the strongest sense, to become a ruptural principle, there must be an accumulation of circumstances and currents so that whatever their origin and sense (and many of them will necessarily be strangely foreign to the revolution, or even its 'direct opponents' in origin and sense), they *fuse* into a *ruptural unity*: the immense majority of the popular masses grouped in an assault on a regime which its ruling classes are unable to defend.¹⁹ Such

¹⁹ For the whole of this passage, see (1) Lenin: *Left-Wing Communism*, op. cit., pp. 430-444-445; particularly: "Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old way, and when the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way—only then can revolution triumph." p. 430 (2) Lenin: *Letters from Afar*, No. 1, op. cit., pp. 35-36, notably "That the revolution succeeded so quickly . . . is only due to the fact that, as a result of an extremely unique historical situation, absolutely dissimilar currents, absolutely heterogeneous class interests, absolutely contrary political and social strivings have merged . . . in a strikingly 'harmonious' manner. . ." p. 35 (Lenin's emphasis).

situation presupposes not only the 'fusion' of the two basic conditions into a 'single national crisis' but each condition considered (abstractly) by itself presupposes the 'fusion' of an 'accumulation' of contradictions. How else could the class-divided masses (proletarians, peasants, petits bourgeois) throw themselves together into a general assault on the existing régime? And how else could the ruling classes, (aristocrats, big bourgeois, industrial bourgeois, finance bourgeois, etc), who have learnt through long experience and sure instinct to fix between themselves, despite their class differences, a holy alliance against the exploited, find themselves reduced to impotence, divided at the decisive moment, with neither new political solutions nor new political leaders, deprived of foreign class support, disarmed in the very fortress of their state machine, and suddenly overwhelmed by the people they had so long suppressed by exploitation, violence and deceit? If, as in this situation, a vast accumulation of 'contradictions' come into play in the same court, some of which are radically heterogeneous—of different origins, different sense, different *levels* and *points* of application—but which nevertheless 'group themselves' into a ruptural unity, we can no longer talk of the sole, unique power of the general 'contradiction'.

Of course, the basic contradiction dominating the period (when the revolution is 'the order of the day') is active in all these 'contradictions' and even in their 'fusion'. But, strictly speaking, it cannot be claimed that these contradictions and their fusion are merely the *pure phenomena* of the general contradiction. The circumstances and currents constituting it are more than its phenomena pure and simple. They derive from the relations of production, which are, of course, one of the *terms* of the contradiction, but at the same time its *conditions of existence*; from the superstructures, instances deriving from it, but with their own consistency and efficacy; from the international conjuncture itself, which intervenes as a determination with a specific role to play.²⁰ This means that if the 'differences' constituting each of the instances in play (manifested in the accumulation discussed by Lenin) group themselves into a real unity, they are not 'dissipated' as pure phenomena in the internal unity of a simple contradiction. The unity they constitute in this 'fusion' into a revolutionary rupture,²¹ is constituted by their own essence and efficacy, by what they are according to the specific modalities of their action. In constituting this unity, they reconstitute and consummate their basic animating unity, but at the same time they also bring out its *nature*: the 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining and determined in one and the same movement by the various *levels* and *instances* of the social

²⁰ Lenin goes so far as to include among the causes of the success of the Soviet Revolution the natural wealth of the country and its geographical extent, the shelter of the Revolution in its necessary military and political 'retreats'.

²¹ The 'crisis' situation, as Lenin often remarked, has a *regulatory* role for the structure and dynamic of the social formation living through it. What is said of a revolutionary situation can therefore be referred cautiously to the social formation in a situation prior to the revolutionary crisis.

formation it animates; it might be called *in principle overdetermined*.²²

I am not particularly taken by this term *overdetermination* (borrowed from other disciplines), but I use it in the absence of anything better, both as an index and as a problem, and also because it enables us to see clearly why we are dealing with something quite different from the Hegelian contradiction.

Hegel and Marx

In fact a Hegelian contradiction is never really overdetermined, even when it has all the appearances of being so. For example, in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, which describes the 'experiences' of consciousness and the dialectic which culminates in Absolute Knowledge, contradiction does not appear to be simple, but on the contrary very complex. Strictly speaking, only the first contradiction—between sensuous consciousness and its knowledge—can be called simple. The further we progress in the dialectic of its production, the richer becomes consciousness, the more complex its contradiction. However, it can be shown that this complexity is not the complexity of an *effective overdetermination*, but the complexity of a cumulative *interiorization* which is only apparently an overdetermination. In fact at each moment of its becoming consciousness lives and experiences its own essence (the essence corresponding to its stage of development) through all the echoes of the essences it has previously been, and through the allusive presence of the corresponding historical forms. Hegel, therefore, argues that any consciousness has a suppressed-conserved past even in its present, and a world (the world whose consciousness it could be, but which is marginal in the *Phenomenology*, its presence virtual and latent), and that therefore it also has as its past the worlds of its surpassed essences. But these past images of consciousness and these latent worlds (corresponding to the images) never affect present consciousness as effective determinations different from itself: these images and worlds concern it only as *echoes* (memories, phantoms of its historicity) of what it has become, that is, as *anticipations of or allusions to itself*. Because the past is never more than the internal essence of the future it contains, this presence of the past is the presence to consciousness of consciousness itself, and no *true external determination*. A circle of circles, consciousness has only one centre, which solely determines it; it would need circles with another centre than itself—*eccentric circles*—for it to be affected at its centre by their action, in short for its essence to be overdetermined by them. But this is not the case.

This truth emerges even more clearly from the *Philosophy of History*. Here again we encounter an apparent overdetermination: are not all historical societies constituted of an infinity of concrete determinations from political laws to religion via customs, habits, financial, commercial and economic régimes, the educational system, the arts, philosophy

²² Cf. Mao's development of the theme of the distinction between *antagonistic* (explosive, revolutionary) contradictions and *non-antagonistic* contradictions ((*Contradiction*) etc.

etc? However, none of these determinations is essentially outside the others, not only because together they constitute an original, organic totality, but above all because this totality is *reflected in a unique internal principle*, which is the truth of all those concrete determinations. Thus Rome: its mighty history, its institutions, its crises and ventures are nothing but the temporal manifestation of the internal principle of the abstract juridical personality; and its destruction. Of course, this internal principle contains as echoes the principle of each of the historical formations it has sublated, but as its own echoes—this is why it has only one centre, the centre of all the past worlds conserved in its memory; this is why it is *simple*. And the contradiction appears in this very simplicity: in Rome, the Stoic consciousness as consciousness of the contradiction inherent in the concept of the abstract juridical personality, which aims for the concrete world of subjectivity, but misses it. This is the contradiction that will bring down Rome and generate its future: the image of subjectivity in medieval Christianity. All Rome's complexity fails to overdetermine the contradiction in the simple Roman principle, which is merely the internal essence of this infinite historical wealth.

We have only to ask *why* Hegel conceived the phenomena of historical mutation in terms of this simple concept of contradiction to reach precisely *the* essential question. The simplicity of the Hegelian contradiction is made possible only by the simplicity of the internal principle constituting the essence of any historical period. If it is possible in principle to reduce the totality, the infinite diversity, of a historically given society (Greece, Rome, The Holy Roman Empire, England, etc) to a simple internal principle, this very simplicity can be reflected in the contradiction to which it thereby acquires a right. Must we be even plainer? This reduction itself (Hegel derived the idea from Montesquieu), the reduction of *all* the elements that make up the concrete life of an historical epoch (economic, social, political and legal institutions, customs, morals, art, religion, philosophy, and even historical events: wars, battles, defeats, etc) to *one* principle of internal unity, is only possible on the absolute condition of taking the whole concrete life of a people for the exteriorization-alienation of an internal spiritus principle, which can never definitely be anything but the most abstract form of self-consciousness of that epoch: its religious or philosophic consciousness, that is, its ideology.

I think we can now see how the 'mystical shell' affects and contaminate the 'kernel'—for the simplicity of the Hegelian contradiction is never more than a reflection of the simplicity of this internal principle of people, that is, not its material reality, but its most abstract ideology. It is also why Hegel could represent Universal History from the Ancient Orient to the present day as 'dialectical', that is, moved by the simple play of a principle of *simple* contradiction. It is why there is never for him any really basic rupture, no actual end to any real history—no any radical beginning. It is why his philosophy of history is garnished with uniformly 'dialectical' mutations. This stupefying conception is only defensible from the Spirit's topmost peak. From that vantage point what does it matter if a people die if it has embodied the determinate principle of a moment of the Idea (which has plenty more to come

if it has cast it off to add it to that Self-Memory which is History, thereby delivering it to such and such another people (even if their historical relation is very tenuous) who, reflecting it in their substance, will find in it the promise of their own internal principle, as if by chance the logically consecutive moment of the Idea, etc., etc. It must be clear that all these arbitrary decisions (shot through with insights of genius) are not just confined miraculously to Hegel's 'world-conception', to his 'system', but are reflected in the structure of his work, even the structures of his dialectic, particularly in the 'contradiction' whose task is the magical movement of the concrete contents of a historical epoch onwards to its ideological Goal.

Thus the Marxist 'inversion' of the Hegelian dialectic is something quite different from an extraction pure and simple. If we clearly perceive the intimate and close relation that the Hegelian structure of the dialectic has with Hegel's 'world-conception', the latter cannot simply be cast aside without obliging us to alter profoundly the structures of that dialectic. If not, whether we will it or no, we shall drag along with us, 150 years after Hegel's death, and 100 years after Marx's, the shreds of the famous 'mystical wrapping'.

The Exception and the Rule

Let us return to Lenin and thence to Marx. If it is true, as Leninist practice and reflection prove, that the revolutionary situation in Russia was precisely a result of the intense overdetermination of the basic class contradiction, we should perhaps ask what is exceptional in this 'exceptional situation' and if, like all exceptions, this one does not clarify a rule—is not, unbeknownst, *the rule itself*. For, after all, *are we not always in exceptional situations?* The failure of the 1849 Revolution in Germany was an exception, the failure in Paris in 1871 was an exception, the German Social-Democratic failure of the beginning of the 20th century in producing the chauvinism of 1914 was an exception, the success of 1917 was an exception . . . exceptions, but *with respect to what?* Nothing but the *abstract* idea, which is nonetheless comforting and reassuring, of a pure, simple, 'dialectical' schema, which in its very simplicity seems to have retained the memory (or rediscovered the allure) of the Hegelian model and its faith in the resolving 'power' of the abstract contradiction as such: particularly the beautiful contradiction between Capital and Labour. I do not deny that the 'simplicity' of this purified schema answered to certain subjective necessities for the mobilization of the masses; after all we know perfectly well that utopian forms of socialism also played their historical part, and played it well because they appealed to the masses within the limits of their consciousness and to lead them forward, here, above all, is where they must be seized. It will soon be necessary to do what Marx and Engels did for utopian socialism, but this time for those still schematic-utopian forms of mass consciousness influenced by Marxism (even the consciousness of certain of its theoreticians) in the first stage of its history: a real historical study of the conditions and forms of that

consciousness.²³ In fact, we find that all the important historical and political articles by Marx and Engels during this period give us precisely the material for a preliminary reflection on these so-called 'exceptions'. They reveal the basic notion that *the contradiction between Capital and Labour is never simple, but always specified by the historically concrete forms and circumstances in which it is exercised*. It is specified by the forms of the superstructure (the State, the dominant ideology, religion, politically organized movements, etc); specified by the internal and external historical situation which determines it as on the one hand a function of the *national past* (completed or 'relapsed' bourgeois revolution, feudal exploitation eliminated wholly, partially or not at all, local 'customs', specific national traditions, even the 'particular style' of political struggles and behaviour, etc. . .), and on the other as functions of the *existing world context* (what dominates it: competition of capitalist nations, or 'imperialist internationalism' or competition within imperialism, etc), many of these phenomena deriving from the 'law of uneven development' in Lenin's sense.

What can this mean but that the apparently simple contradiction is *always overdetermined*? The exception thus discovers in itself the rule, the rule of rules, and the old 'exceptions' must be regarded as methodologically simple examples of the *new rule*. To extend the analysis to all

²³ In 1890 Engels wrote (in a letter to J. Bloch, September, 21st 1890): 'Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle *vis-à-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights.' (*Selected Works* II, 490)

In the control of this proposed research, I would like to quote the notes which Gramsci devoted to the mechanistic-fatalistic temptation in the history of 19th century Marxism: 'the determinist, fatalist element has been an immediate ideological "aroma" of the philosophy of praxis, a form of religion and a stimulant (but like a drug) necessitated and historically justified by the 'subordinate' character of certain social strata. When one does not have the initiative in the struggle and the struggle itself is ultimately identified with a series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a formidable power of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance. "I am defeated for the moment but the nature of things is on my side in the long run," etc. Real will is disguised as an act of faith, a sure rationality of history, a primitive and empirical form of impassioned finalism which appears as a substitute for the predestination, providence, etc, of the confessional religions. We must insist on the fact that even in such cases there exists in reality a strong active will We must stress the fact that fatalism has only been a cover by the weak for an active and real will. This is why it is always necessary to show the futility of mechanical determinism, which, explicable as a naïve philosophy of the masses, becomes a cause of passivity, of imbecile self-sufficiency, when it is made into a reflexive and coherent philosophy on the part of the intellectuals . . . This opposition (intellectuals-masses) might appear strange from the pen of a Marxist theoretician. But it should be realized that Gramsci's concept of the *intellectual* is infinitely greater than ours, that it is not defined by the idea intellectual have of themselves, but by their social rôle as *organizers* and (more or less subordinate) *leaders*. In this sense he wrote: "The affirmation that all the members of a political party should be considered intellectuals lends itself to jokes and caricature. But on reflection nothing could be more accurate. There must be a distinction of levels, with a party having more or less of the higher or lower level, but this is no what matters: what does matter is their function, which is to direct and to organize that is, it is educational, which means intellectual." (Antonio Gramsci: *Opera* II *II Materialismo Storico*, pp. 13-14; *The Modern Prince*, pp. 69-70. *Opera* III: *G. Intellettuali*, p. 12)

phenomena using this rule, I should like to suggest that an 'over-determined contradiction' may either be overdetermined in the sense of a historical inhibition, a real 'block' for the contradiction (for example, Wilhelmine Germany), or in the sense of a revolutionary rupture²⁴ (Russia in 1917), but in neither condition is it ever found in the 'pure' state. 'Purity' itself would be the exception, but I know of no example to quote.

Conception of History

But if every contradiction appears in historical practice and in Marxist historical experience as an overdetermined contradiction; if this overdetermination constitutes the *specificity* of the Marxist contradiction as opposed to the Hegelian contradiction; if the 'simplicity' of the Hegelian dialectic is inseparable from his 'world-conception', particularly the conception of history it reflects, we must ask what is the content, the *raison d'être* of the overdetermination of the Marxist contradiction, and how can the Marxist conception of society be reflected in this overdetermination. This is a crucial question, for it is obvious that if we cannot demonstrate the *necessary link* uniting the particular structure of contradiction according to Marx to his conception of society and history; if this overdetermination is not based on the concepts of the Marxist theory of history, the category is up in the air. For however accurate and verified it may be in political practice, we have only so far used it descriptively, that is contingently, and like all descriptions it is still at the mercy of the earliest or latest philosophical theory.

But this raises the ghost of the Hegelian model again—not of its abstract model of contradiction, but of the concrete model of his *conception of history* reflected in the contradiction. If we are to prove that the specific structure of the Marxist contradiction is based on Marx's conception of history, we must first ensure that this conception is not itself a mere 'inversion' of the Hegelian conception. It is true that we could argue as a first approximation that Marx 'inverted' the Hegelian conception of history. This can be quickly illustrated. The whole Hegelian conception is dominated by the dialectic of the internal principle of each society; as Marx said 20 times, Hegel explains the material life, the concrete history of peoples by a dialectic of consciousness (the self-consciousness of a people: its ideology). For Marx, on the other hand, the material life of men explains their history; their consciousness, their ideologies are then merely phenomena of their material life. This opposition certainly has all the appearances of an 'inversion'.

To take it to an extreme caricature: what do we find in Hegel? A conception of society which takes over the achievements of 18th-century political theory and political economy, and considers any

²⁴ Cf. Engels (Letter to Schmidt, October 27th 1890, *op. cit.* II, 493): "The reaction of the state power upon economic development can be one of three kinds: it can run in the same direction, and then development is more rapid; it can oppose the line of development, in which case nowadays state power in every great people will go to pieces in the long run . . ." This demonstrates the character of the two limit positions.

society (any modern society of course; but the present reveals what was once only a promise) as constituted of two societies: the society of needs, or *civil society*, and the political society or state and everything embodied in the state: religion, philosophy; shortly, the self-consciousness of an epoch. For Hegel material life (civil society, that is, the economy) is merely a Ruse of Reason. Apparently autonomous, it is obedient to a law outside itself; its own goal, its condition of possibility, the state, that is spiritual life. So we have therefore a way of inverting Hegel which would apparently give us Marx. It is simply to *invert the relation of the terms (and thus to retain them)*; civil society and state, economy and politics-ideology—to transform the essence into phenomena and the phenomena into an essence, or if you prefer, to make the ruse of reason work backwards. While for Hegel the politico-ideological was the essence of the economic, for Marx the economic is the essence of the politico-ideological. Politics and ideology are therefore merely pure phenomena of the economic which is their 'truth'. For Hegel's 'pure' principle of consciousness (of the self-consciousness of an epoch), for the simple internal principle which he conceived as the principle of the intelligibility of all the determinations of a historical period, we have substituted another simple principle, its opposite: material life, the economy—a simple principle which in turn becomes the sole principle of the universal intelligibility of all the determinations of an historical people.²⁵ Is this a caricature? If we take Marx's famous comments on the hand-mill, the water-mill and the steam-mill literally or out of context, this is their meaning. The logical consequence of this is the *exact mirror image of the Hegelian dialectic*—the only difference being that it is no longer a question of deriving the successive moments from the Idea, but from the Economy, on the basis of the same internal contradiction. This attempt results in the radical reduction of the dialectic of history to the dialectic generator of the successive modes of production, that is, in the last analysis, of the different production techniques. There are names for these deviations in the history of Marxism: *economism* and even *technologism*.



But these terms have only to be spoken to evoke the memory of the theoretical and practical struggles of Marx and his disciples against these 'deviations'. And how many peremptory attacks on economism there are to counterbalance that well-thumbed piece on the steam engine! Let us abandon this caricature, not to hide behind official condemnation, but to examine the authentic principles at work in those condemnations and in Marx's real thought.

The State and Civil Society

For all its apparent rigour, the fiction of the 'inversion' is now clearly untenable. We know that Marx did not retain the terms of the Hegelian model of society and 'invert' them. He substituted other, distantly related terms for them. Further, he overhauled the relation which had previously dominated the terms. For Marx, both terms and relation changed in nature and sense.

²⁵ Of course, as with all 'inversions' this retains the terms of the Hegelian conception. *civil society* and *the State*.

Firstly, *the terms* are not the same.

Of course, Marx still talks of 'civil society' (especially in *The German Ideology*) but as an allusion to the past, to denote the site of his discoveries, not to reutilize the concept. The formation of this concept requires close examination. Beneath the abstract forms of the political philosophy of the 18th century and the more concrete forms of its political economy we discover, not a true theory of economic history, nor even a true economic theory, but a situating and description of economic behaviour, in short a sort of philosophico-economic phenomenology. What is remarkable in this undertaking, as much in its philosophers (Locke, Helvetius, etc) as in its economists (Turgot, Smith, etc), is that this description of civil society acts as if it were the description (and foundation) of what Hegel, aptly summarizing its spirit, called 'the world of needs'; a world, in its internal essence, in immediate relation to the relations of individuals defined by their particular wishes, personal interests, in short, their needs. We know that Marx's whole conception of political economy is based on the critique of this pre-supposition (the *homo oeconomicus* and its moral or legal abstraction, the 'Man' of philosophy); how then could he make use of a concept which is its direct product? Neither this (abstract) description of economic behaviour nor its supposed basis in the mythical *homo oeconomicus* interested Marx—his concern was rather the 'anatomy' of this world, and the dialectic of the mutations of this 'anatomy'. Therefore the concept of 'civil society'—the world of individual economic behaviour and its ideological origin—disappears from Marx's work. He understands abstract economic reality (which Smith, for example, rediscovers in the laws of the market as a result of his search for a foundation) as the effect of a deeper, more concrete reality: the mode of production of a determinate social formation. Thus for the first time individual economic behaviour (which was the pretext for economic-philosophic phenomenology) is measured according to its conditions of existence. The degree of development of the forces of production, the state of the *relations of production*: these are the basic Marxist concepts. 'Civil society' may well have indicated the *place* of the new concepts, but it did not contribute to their matter. But where in Hegel would you find this matter?

As far as the state is concerned, it is quite easy to show that it has a quite different content for Marx from that it had for Hegel. Not just because the state can no longer be the 'reality of the Idea', but primarily because it is systematically considered as an *instrument of coercion* in the hands of the ruling, exploiting class. Beneath the 'description' and sublimation of attributes of the state, Marx finds here also a new concept, foreshadowed in the 18th century (Longuet, Rousseau, etc), taken up by Hegel in his *Philosophy of Right* (which made it into a 'phenomenon' of the ruse of reason which triumphs in the state: the opposition of wealth and poverty), and abundantly used by the historians of the 1830's: the concept of social class, in direct relation with the relations of production. The intervention of this new concept and its relationship with one of the basic concepts of the economic structure transforms the *essence of the state* from top to toe, for the latter is no longer above human groups, but at the service of the ruling class.

it is not longer its mission to consummate itself in art, religion and philosophy but to set them at the service of the ruling class, or rather to force them to base themselves on ideas and themes which it renders dominant; it therefore ceases to be the 'truth of' civil society to become, not the 'truth of' some other thing, not even of the economy but the means of action and domination of a social class, etc.

But *the relations themselves* change as well as *the terms*.

We should not think that this means a new technical distribution of rôles imposed by the multiplication of new terms. How are these new terms arranged? On the one hand the *infrastructure* (the economic base the forms of production and relations of production); on the other, the *superstructure* (the state and all legal, political and ideological forms). We have seen that one could attempt to maintain a *Hegelian relation* (the relation Hegel imposed between civil society and the state) between these two groups of categories: the relation between *essence* and *phenomena*, sublimated in the concept of the 'truth of . . .'. For Hegel the state is the 'truth of' civil society, which thanks to the action of the ruse of reason is merely its own phenomenon consummated in civil society. For a Marx thus relegated to the rank of a Hobbes or a Locke, civil society would be nothing but the 'truth' of its phenomenon, the state, which an economic ruse of reason had then put at the service of a class: the ruling class. Unfortunately for this neat schema this is not Marx. For him this tacit identity (phenomenon-essence-truth-of . . .) of the economic and political disappears in favour of a new conception of the relation of determinant instances in the infrastructure-superstructure complex which constitutes the essence of any social formation. Of course these specific relations between infrastructure and superstructure still need theoretical elaboration and research. However, Marx has at least given us the 'two ends of the chain' and has told us to find out what goes on between them: on the one hand *determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production*; on the other *the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific efficacy*. This clearly breaks with the Hegelian principle of explanation by self-consciousness (ideology) but also with the Hegelian theme of phenomenon-essence-truth-of. We are definitely concerned with a new relationship between new terms.

Listen, again, to Engels in 1890, taking the young 'economists' to task for not having understood that this was a *new relationship*.²⁶ Production is the determinant factor, but only 'in the last instance': 'more than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, empty phrase.' And for explanation: 'The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—the political forms of the class struggle and its results: to wit constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc, juridical forms, and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views

²⁶ Letter from Engels to J. Bloch, September 21st, 1890 (Marx-Engels *Selects Works*, II, 488-489).

and their further development into systems of dogmas—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles, and in many cases preponderate in determining their *form* . . .’ The word ‘form’ must be taken in its strongest sense, as quite different from merely ‘formal’. As Engels also says: ‘The Prussian state also arose and developed from historical, ultimately economic causes. But it could scarcely be maintained without pedantry that among the many small states of North Germany, Brandenburg was specifically determined by economic necessity to become the great power embodying the economic, linguistic and, after the Reformation, also the religious difference between North and South, and not by other elements as well (above all by the entanglement with Poland, owing to the possession of Prussia, and hence with international political relations—which were indeed also decisive in the formation of the Austrian dynastic power)’.²⁷

Base and Superstructure

Here, then, are the two ends of the chain: the economy is determinant, but *in the last instance*; Engels is prepared to say, in the long run, the run of History. But History ‘blazes its trail’ through the multiform world of the superstructure, from local tradition²⁸ to international circumstance. Leaving aside the *theoretical solution* Engels proposes for the problem of the relation between determination *in the last instance*—the economic—those determinations imposed by the superstructures, national traditions and international events, it is sufficient to hang on to what should be called the *accumulations of effective determinations* (deriving from the superstructures and special national and international circumstances) *on the determination in the last instance by the economic*. It seems to me that this clarifies the expression: *overdetermined contradiction*, which I am proposing, *this* specifically because the existence of over determination is no longer a fact pure and simple, for in its essentials we have related it to its foundations, even if our exposition has so far been merely gestural. This *overdetermination* is inevitable and conceivable as soon as the real existence of the forms of the superstructure and of the national and international conjuncture is recognized — an existence largely specific and autonomous, and therefore irreducible to a pure *phenomenon*. We must carry this through to its conclusion and say that this overdetermination does not just refer to apparently unique or aberrant historical situations (Germany, for example), but is universal; the economic dialectic is never active *in the pure state*; in history, those instances—the superstructures, etc.—are never seen to step aside when their work is done or, when the time comes, as his pure phenomena, to scatter before His Majesty the Economy as he strides along the royal road of the Dialectic. From the first moment to the last the lonely hour of the ‘last instance’ never comes.

In short, the idea of a ‘pure and simple’ non-overdetermined contr

²⁷ Engels adds: ‘Marx hardly wrote anything in which this theory did not play part. But especially *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is a most excellent example of its application. There are also many allusions in *Capital*.’ (Ibid. p. 48) He also cites *Anti-Dühring* and *Ludwig Feuerbach*.

²⁸ Engels: ‘Political conditions . . . and even the traditions which haunt human mind also play a part.’ (Ibid. p. 488)

diction is, as Engels said of the economist turn of phrase 'meaningless abstract, senseless'. That it can act as a pedagogical model, or rather that it served as a polemical and pedagogic instrument at a certain point in history does not fix its destiny for all time. After all, pedagogic systems often change historically. It is time to make the effort to raise pedagogy to the level of circumstances, that is, of historical needs. But we must all be able to see that this pedagogical effort *presupposes* another purely theoretical effort. For if Marx has given us the general principles and some concrete examples (*The Eighteenth Brumaire*, *The Civil War in France*, etc), if all political practice in the history of Socialist and Communist movements constitutes an inexhaustible reservoir of concrete 'experiential protocol', it has to be said that the theory of the specific influence of the superstructures and other 'circumstances' largely remains to be elaborated; and before the theory of their influence or simultaneously (for by formulating their influence their *essence* is attained) there must be elaboration of the theory of the particular essence of the specific elements of the superstructure. Like the map of Africa before the great explorations, this theory remains a realm sketched in outline, with its great mountain chains and rivers, often unknown in detail beyond a few well-known regions. Who has attempted to follow up the explorations of Marx and Engels? I can only think of Gramsci.²⁹ But this task is indispensable if we are to be able even to set out propositions more precise than these approximations on the character of the over-determination of the Marxist contradictions, based primarily on the existence and nature of the superstructures.

Survivals and Phantoms

Allow me one last example. Marxist political practice is constantly coming up against that reality known as 'survivals'. There can be no doubt that these survivals exist; they cling tenaciously to life. Lenin struggles with them inside the Russian Party before the revolution. It does not have to be pointed out that from then till now they have been the source of constant difficulties, struggles and commentaries. What is a 'survival'? What is its theoretical status? Is it essentially social or psychological? Can it be reduced to the survival of certain economic *structures* which the Revolution was unable to destroy with its first decrees: for example, the small-scale production (primarily peasant production in Russia) which so preoccupied Lenin? Or does it refer as much to *other structures*, political, ideological structures, etc customs, habits, even 'traditions' such as the 'national tradition' with

²⁹ Lukács' essays, which are limited to the history of literature and philosophy seem to me to be contaminated with a guilty Hegelianism: as if Lukács wanted to absolve through Hegel his upbringing by Simmel and Dilthey. Gramsci is of another stature. The jottings and developments in the *Prison Notebooks* touch on all the basic problems of Italian and European history: economic, social, political and cultural. There are some completely original and in some cases genial insights into our problem. Also, as always with true discoveries, there are *new concepts*, for example, *hegemony*: a remarkable example of a theoretical solution in outline to the problems of the interpenetration of the economic and political. Unfortunately, at least as far as France is concerned, who has taken up and followed through Gramsci's theoretical effort?

its specific traits? The term 'survival' is constantly invoked, but it is still virtually unknown, in so far as it has only been a *name* and not a *concept*. The concept it deserves (and has fairly won) must be more than a vague Hegelianism such as 'sublation'—the maintenance-of-what-has-been-negated-in-its-very-negation (that is, the negation of the negation). If we return to Hegel for a second we can see that the survival of the past, as the sublated (*aufgehoben*) can simply be reduced to the modality of a *memory*, which, further, is merely the inverse of (that is, the same thing as) an *anticipation*. Just as at the dawn of Human History the first stammerings of the Oriental Spirit—joyous captive of the giants of the sky, the sea and the desert and then of its stone bestiary—already betrayed the unconscious presage of the future achievements of the Absolute spirit, so in each instant of Time the past survives in the form of a memory of what it has been; that is, as the whispered promise of the present. That is why *the past is never opaque or an obstacle*. It must always be digestible as it has been *pre-digested*. Rome lived happily in a world impregnated by Greece: 'sublated' Greece survived as objective memories: its reproduced temples, its assimilated religion, its reworked philosophy. Without knowing it, as at last it died to bring forth its Roman future, it was already Rome, so it never shackled Rome in Rome. That is why the present can feed on the shades of the past, or project them before it, just as the great effigies of Roman Virtue opened the road to Revolution and Terror for the Jacobins. The past is never anything more than the present and only recalls that law of interiority which is the destiny of the whole future of Humanity.

This is enough to show that, though the word is still meaningful, Marx's conception of 'sublation' has nothing to do with this dialectic of historical comfort; his past was no shade, not even an objective shade—it is a terribly positive and active structured reality, just as cold, hunger and the night are for his poor worker. How, then, are these survivals conceived? As a determined number of *realities*, whether superstructures, ideologies, 'national traditions' or the customs and 'spirit' of a people, etc. As the overdetermination of any contradiction and of any constitutive element of a society, which means: (1) that a revolution of the infrastructure does not *ipso facto* modify the existing superstructures and particularly the ideologies at one blow (as it would if the economic was the sole determinant factor), for they have sufficient of their own consistency to survive beyond their immediate life context, even to recreate, to 'secrete' substitute conditions of existence temporarily; (2) that the new society produced by the Revolution may itself ensure the survival and reactivation of older elements through both the forms of its superstructures and specific (national and international) circumstances. Such a reactivation is totally inconceivable for a dialectic deprived of overdetermination. I shall not evade the most burning issue: it seems to me that either the whole logic of 'sublation' must be rejected, or we must give up any attempt to explain how the proud and generous Russian people bore Stalin's crimes and repression with such resignation how the Bolshevik Party could tolerate them; and how a Communist leader could order them. But there is obviously much *theoretical* effort needed here as elsewhere. By this I mean more than the historical

work which has priority—precisely because of this priority, priority given to one essential of any Marxist historical study: rigour; *rigorous conception of Marxist concepts, their implications and their development; a rigorous conception and research into their essential subject-matter that is, into what distinguishes them once and for all from their phantoms.*

One phantom is more especially crucial than any other today: the shadow of Hegel. To drive this phantom back into the night we need *a little more light* on Marx, or what is the same thing, *a little more Marx: light on Hegel himself*. We can then escape from the ambiguities and confusions of the 'inversion'.

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motifs

El Lissitzky

When we published the Jakobson-Tynyanov theses last year (NLR 37) we wished to draw attention to the confrontation of vanguard art and aesthetics with revolutionary politics and theory in the Soviet Union during the decade after the Bolshevik Revolution. El Lissitzky's polemic on the future of the book is another key document from the same period. Just as Jakobson and Tynyanov prefigured much of the current debate on structuralism, Lissitzky in an obvious way fore shadows many of the insights of Marshall McLuhan. By going back to the twenties we are not being in the least antiquarian but posing the problems which, say, Barthes or McLuhan have raised, but in a revolutionary context. Moreover Lissitzky was himself a practising artist for whom theoretical problems were inextricably intertwined with his work and his politics.

Lissitzky was born near Smolensk in 1890. Before the Revolution he trained as an engineer and architect in Darmstadt, visited Paris and travelled throughout Italy. On his return to Russia he worked as an apprentice architect, but devoted his time increasingly to painting and book illustration, especially children's books. His work was heavily influenced by both Jewish and Russian peasant popular art. In 1917 he rallied to the Revolution and a year later designed the first Soviet flag which were carried across Red Square on May Day. Chagall, who shared his preoccupation with Jewish and folk art, invited him to teach at the Vitebsk Art School. But it was here, paradoxically, that Lissitzky fell under the influence of Malevich, who was to oust Chagall from his post as Principal. In this way he came in contact with Constructivism and entered the modern era. He worked principally on posters, such as the famous *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, architectural drawing and book designs. Lissitzky also devoted himself to elaborating a network of contacts throughout Europe, addressing conferences of Dadaists, contributing to *De Stijl*, lecturing widely and co-founding the trilingual magazine *Veslob-Gegenstand-Objet* in Berlin. During the latter part of the twenties he began to concentrate on furniture and interior design and, after the onset of Stalinism, was able to continue work designing exhibition displays and pavilions and from 193

onwards was the typographer of the periodical *U.S.S.R. In Reconstruction*. Since 1923 he had suffered from tuberculosis; during the thirties his health declined seriously and he died in 1941.

Lissitsky's own life and work reflect the interpenetration and cross-fertilization of the arts which took place in Russia during the twenties. The idea behind his *Proxm* series of drawings was to make a bridge between painting and architecture; he was a pioneer of the integration of word and image in poster and book design. We can see the same thing with many other artists of the time: Tatlin's development from painting to reliefs, architecture and, concerned over every Russian's needs during the cold winter, the design of clothes, stoves and samovars; Rodchenko's work in photo-montage in collaboration with Mayakovsky and Dziga Vertov, the film director; the work of Mayakovsky, Shklovsky, Brik, etc. in the cinema and, indeed, Eisenstein's development out of theatre into film, and his interest in synaesthesia. Once again we are living in a period in which the arts are merging into each other: Lissitsky's projects in typography are clearly related to the growing movement of concrete poetry today; photo-montage reappears in the work of Rauschenberg and Larry Rivers; and the invocation of Gutenberg immediately calls to mind McLuhan.

However, we should be clear of the distinction between Lissitsky's approach and McLuhan's. Lissitsky stresses that the hieroglyph or ideogram should be the carrier of a *concept* and points out the difference between the American advertising poster, momentary and sub-liminal, and the Soviet agitation poster, designed to be read consciously. This is a far cry from McLuhan's 'sacralization' and 'tribalization'. Moreover, McLuhan's theories are drawn from an uncritical observation of modern capitalist society; Lissitsky's from an active involvement in the construction of a socialist society.

If we are to discuss Marxist aesthetics, we must go back to the twenties in Russia when all the crucial problems were posed in a situation of urgency and struggle. We must consider the kind of relationship which developed then between art and agitation (agit-trains, films, posters, etc) and art and design (architecture, ergonomics, the so-called 'applied arts': furniture, typography, clothing, etc). We must consider how the work started in Russia, found a continuation in the Bauhaus, and its development from there, in order to be able to re-integrate the past into the ongoing present. We must also look closely at futurism—Lissitsky mentions its English manifestation *Blast!*—and at phenomena such as the 'theatre of fact' in the light of the work of Meyerhold and Tretyakov (e.g. his plays, *Roar China!*, and *Gas-Masks* staged in a gas factory) to which Lissitsky also alludes.

The modernity and relevance of Lissitsky's ideas are remarkable at all levels. Specifically on the central subject of this article—the book—many of Lissitsky's headier prognostications have not been fully realized: so far young West German writers have been the quickest to realize the possibilities of the technical innovations Lissitsky refers to. But Lissitsky's implicit condemnation of 'American posters, designed for rapid perception from a passing motor-car' still holds good

Notions of slicing-up or reorganizing the conventional design of book are greeted as examples of unbridled, self-indulgent avant-gardism. Notions of varying typefaces for varying series of rhetoric are often dismissed as being technically impossible and economically expensive and we are thus confined to simple roman and italic type. To asperse the typeface of a book is regarded as pedantic aestheticism. To extol the fact that there are now typewriters with varying type-balls and which automatically justify their margins is not regarded as particularly important, except by the few who realize that these new technical devices have opened up a whole new terrain of communication, no longer held in the rigid and expensive grip of letterpress and linotype. The world of the poster is still largely unexplored. All along the desolate stretches of hoardings and underground stations we have only ephemera, to be consumed in the twinkling of an eye. Only when book can be serialized on large posters in these undergrounds, when we have this kind of expansion of the possibilities of the printed word and the image, will the revolution indicated by El Lissitzky be properly in train.

This article was first published in the Gutenberg-Jahrbuch, Mainz, 1926-27.

The Future of the Book

El Lissitzky

Every artistic innovation is unique, it has no development. In time different variations on the same theme grow up around innovation maybe higher, maybe lower, but they will rarely reach the original power of the first. This goes on until long familiarity has made the effect of the work of art so automatic that the senses no longer react to the worn means and the time is ripe for a further technical innovation. However, the 'technical' and the 'artistic' (so-called) are inseparable so we must not lightly dispose of a profound relationship by means of a few slogans. At any rate, the first few books printed by Gutenberg with the system of movable type which he invented remain the finest example of the art of book production.

The next few hundred years saw no basic innovations (until photography) in this field. In typography there are just more or less successful variations accompanying technical improvements in the manufacturing apparatus. The same happened with a second discovery in the visual field—with photography. As soon as we give up assuming a complacent superiority over everything else, we must admit that the first Daguerre types are not primitive artefacts needing improvements, but the finest photographic art. It is shortsighted to suppose that machines, i.e. the displacement of manual by mechanical processes, are basic to the development of the form and figure of an artefact. In the first place, the consumer's demand determines the development, i.e. the demand of the social strata that provide the 'commissions'. Today this is not

narrow circle, a thin cream, but 'everybody', the masses. The idea moving the masses today is called materialism, but dematerialization is the characteristic of the epoch. For example, correspondence grows, so the number of letters, the quantity of writing paper, the mass of material consumed expand, until relieved by the telephone. Again, the network and material of supply grow until they are relieved by the radio. Matter diminishes, we dematerialize, sluggish masses of matter are replaced by liberated energy. This is the mark of our epoch. What conclusions does this imply in our field?

I draw the following analogy:

**Inventions in the field
of verbal traffic**

**Inventions in the field
of general traffic**

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Articulated language | Upright gait |
| Writing | The wheel |
| Gutenberg's printing-press | Carts drawn by animal power |
| ? | The automobile |
| ? | The aeroplane |

I have produced this analogy to prove that so long as the book remains a palpable object, i.e. so long as it is not replaced by auto-vocalizing and kino-vocalizing representations, we must look to the field of the manufacture of books for new basic innovations in the near future, so that the general level of the epoch can be reached in this field.

There are signs to hand suggesting that this basic innovation is likely to come from the neighbourhood of the collotype. Here we have a machine which captures the subject matter on a film and a press which copies the negative of the material on to sensitive paper. Thus the frightful weight of the subject matter and the bucket of dye is omitted, so that once again we have dematerialization. The most important thing here is that the mode of production of words and pictures is included in the same process: photography. Up till now photography is that mode of expression which is most comprehensible. We have before us the prospect of a book in which exposition has priority over letters.

We know of two kinds of writing: one sign for each concept—hieroglyphic (modern Chinese); and one sign for each sound—alphabetic. The progress of the alphabetic over the hieroglyphic mode is only relative. Hieroglyphics are international. This means that if a Russian, a German or an American fixes the sign (picture) of a concept in his mind he can read Chinese or Egyptian (soundlessly), without learning the language, for language and writing are always one creation as far as he is concerned.

We may conclude that:

- 1 the hieroglyphic book is international (at least potentially)
- 2 the alphabetic book is national, and
- 3 the book of the future will be non-national; for it needs the least education to understand it.

There are today two dimensions to the word. As sound it is a function of time; as exposition, of space. The book of the future must be both. This is how to overcome the automatism of the contemporary book. . . world-view which has become automatic ceases to exist in our sense so we are left drowning in a void. The dynamic achievement of art is to transform the void into space, i.e. into a unity conceivable for our senses.

An alteration in the structure and mode of language implies a change in the usual appearance of the book. Before the War, printed matter in Europe was appropriately enough converging in appearance in every country. A new optimistic mentality laying stress on immediate evenness and the fleeting moment underlay the origins in America of a new form of printing. They began to modify the relation of word and illustration in exposition into the direct opposite of the European style. The highly developed technique of facsimile-electrotype (half-tones and blocks) was especially important for this development; thus photomontage was born.

After the War, sceptical and stunned Europe marshalled a screaming, burning language: all means must be used to maintain and assert oneself. The catchwords of the epoch were 'attraction' and 'trick'. The new appearance of the book was characterized by:

1 broken-up setting

2 photomontage and typomontage

These facts, which are the basis for our predictions, were already foreshadowed before the War and our Revolution. Marinetti, the siren of Futurism, also dealt with typography in his masterly manifestos. In 1909 he wrote:

"The book will be the futurist expression of our futurist consciousness. I am against what is known as the harmony of a setting. When necessary we will use three or four colours to a page, and 20 different typefaces. E.g. we shall represent a series of uniform, *hasty perceptions* with *curative*, a scream will be expressed in bold type and so on. So a new painterly typographic representation will be born on the printed page.

Many of today's creations do not go beyond this demand. I should like to stress that Marinetti does not call for playing with form as form, but asks rather that the action of a new content should be intensified by the form.

Before the War the notion of the simultaneous book was also proposed and, in a sense, realized. This was in the Poem of Blaise Cendrars typographically conceived by Sonja Delaunay-Terk. It is a foldable strip of paper 5 feet long—an attempt at a new book-form for poetry. The lines of poetry are printed in colour, with colours always discontinued in the content and changed into others.

In England during the War the Vortex group published their magazine *Blast!* in a crude, elementary style, using almost only unrelieved capitals: a style which has become the token of all modern international printing.

In Germany, the 1917 Prospectus of the little *New Jugend* Portfolio¹ is an important document of the new typography.

The new movement which began in Russia in 1908 bound painter and poet together from the very first day; hardly a poetry book has appeared since then without the collaboration of a painter. Poems have been written with the lithographic crayon and signed. They have been cut in wood. Poets themselves have set whole pages. Thus the poets Khlebnikov, Kruchénich, Mayakovski, Asseeyev have worked with the painters Rosanova, Goncharova, Malevich, Popova, Burlyuk, etc. They did not produce select, numbered, de luxe editions, but cheap unlimited volumes, which today we must treat as popular art despite their sophistication.

In the Revolutionary period a latent energy has concentrated in the younger generation of our artists, which can only find release in large-scale popular commissions. The audience has become the masses, the semi-literate masses. With our work the Revolution has achieved a colossal labour of propaganda and enlightenment. We ripped up the traditional book into single pages, magnified these a hundred times, printed them in colour and stuck them up as posters in the streets. Unlike American posters, ours were not designed for rapid perception from a passing motor-car, but to be read and to enlighten from a short distance. If a series of these posters were today to be set in the size of a manageable book, in an order corresponding to some theme, the result would be most curious. Our lack of printing equipment and the necessity for speed meant that, though the best work was hand-printed, the most rewarding was standardized, lapidary and adapted to the simplest mechanical form of reproduction. Thus State Decrees were printed as rolled-up illustrated leaflets, and Army Orders as illustrated pamphlets.

At the end of the Civil War (1920), we had the opportunity to realize our aims in the field of the creation of new books, in spite of the primitiveness of the mechanical means at our disposal. In Vitebsk, we brought out five issues of a magazine called *Unovis*, printed by typewriter, lithography, etching and linocut.

As I have already written: 'Gutenberg's Bible was only printed with letters. But letters alone will not suffice for the handing down of today's Bible. The book finds its way to the brain through the eyes not through the ears; light waves travel much faster and more intensely than sound waves. But humans can only speak to each other with their mouths, whereas the possibilities of the book are multi-form.'

With the advent of the period of reconstruction in 1922, the production of books also rose rapidly. Our best artists seized on the problem of book production. At the beginning of 1922 I and the writer Ily Ehrenburg edited the periodical *Vesbch-Gegenstand-Objekt* which was

¹ The June 1917 number of *New Jugend* (Berlin) was described as 'Prospectus of the little Grosz portfolio', published that autumn. The typography was by John Heartfield.

printed in Berlin. Access to the most developed German printing techniques enabled us to realize some of our ideas about the book. Thus we printed a picture-book *The Story of Two Squares*, which we had finished in our productive period of 1920, and the *Mayakovsky Book* which made even the form of the book corresponding to the particular edition a functional structure. At the same time our artists were exploring the technical possibilities of printing. The State Publishing House and other printing establishments put out books which were shown, and appreciated, at several international exhibitions in Europe. Comrades Popova, Rodchenko, Klutsis, Stepanova and Gerasimov devoted themselves to book design. Some worked directly in the printshop with the compositors and presses (Gerasimov, *et al.*). The growing esteem in which book design is held is indicated by the practice of listing on a special page the names of all the compositors and finishers concerned with the book. This means that there has grown up in the printshops a stratum of workers who have developed a conscious relation to their craft.

Most of the artists produce montages, that is, lay out photographs and suitable captions together on a page which is then made into a block for printing. Thus is conceived a form of undeniable power apparently very simple to handle and therefore easily diverted into banality, but in skilful hands extremely fruitful as a means to visual poetry.

At the outset we said that the expressive power of each artistic innovation is unique and has no development. The innovation of easel painting made great works of art possible, but it has now lost this power. The cinema and the illustrated weekly have succeeded it. We rejoice in the new means which technique has put into our hands. We know that a close relation with the actuality of general events, the continuing heightening of the sensitivity of our optic nerves, the record-breaking speed of social development, our command over plastic material, the reconstruction of the plane and its space and the simmering force of innovation have enabled us to give the book new power as a work of art.

Of course, today's book has not found a new overall structure, it is still a single volume with a cover, a back and pages 1, 2, 3, . . . The same is true of the theatre. Even our most modern drama plays in a theatre like a peepshow, with the public in the stalls, in boxes and in rows in front of the curtain. But the stage has been cleared of all the paraphernalia of painted scenery, the stage-space as a painted perspective has perished. A three-dimensional physical space has been born in the same peepshow, allowing maximal unfolding of the fourth dimension: living movement. Within the book modernism may not yet have gone so far, but we must learn to see the tendency.

Notwithstanding the crisis which book production, like every other area of production, is undergoing, the avalanche of books grows with every passing year. The book is the most monumental art form today no longer is it fondled by the delicate hands of a bibliophile, but seized by a hundred thousand hands. This illuminates the hegemony of

the illustrated weekly in this transition period. We should add to the number of illustrated weeklies the flood of children's picture-books. Our children's reading teaches them a new plastic language, they grow up with a different relation to the world and space, to image and colour, so they are preparing for a new kind of book. But we shall be satisfied if we can conceptualize the epic and lyric developments of our times in our form of book.

Literature between myth and politics

Jiří Hájek

If socialist literature is to give a fuller and more comprehensive interpretation of reality than all other schools, it must systematically demythologize the countless myths that cover up man's alienation in capitalist society. At the same time it must examine critically how far and under what conditions the factors making for alienation in socialist society are being overcome.

Any reality which takes the form of an order of things tends to hide its own inconsistencies and try to perpetuate the state of affairs reached at the moment. Socialist society likewise is subject to these factors, which are rendered all the easier to understand, and all the stronger, by the fact that, in the world's present state, socialism is involved in a perpetual war of defence against a capitalist propaganda which operates by means of a well-tryed, traditional, psychologically proven system of false myths. The 'Left Myth', as Roland Barthes has called it, springs of course not only from the need to fend off external enemies but also from internal reasons: thus a victorious revolution will secure and consolidate its first, historically relative successes chiefly by trying to deny their relativity, turn them into something absolute and identify them with its ultimate goals. Once its own equipment for revolutionary control and self-criticism stops developing or is thrown out of gear, as happened in the Stalin period—once everything is declared to be not only sensible but beyond question—then socialism's whole historical perspective is at stake. For a revolution that allowed itself to be guided entirely by its illusions about itself would lose its sense of reality, its revolutionary dynamism and perspective.

The 'Right Myth' (to cite Barthes once more) has an openly conservative function: it hides capitalist society's class composition, lending an air of legitimacy to the existing order of things by identifying it with an unchangeable and long-prevalent world hierarchy. The 'Left Myth' has quite a different nature and social origin. The society brought about by the revolution has no cause to conceal its class composition or demonstrate the unchangeability of an allegedly old-established order of things: quite the contrary. None the less it too operates as a brake, though in a different manner. Note that for the moment I am speaking of myths as the expressions of a false

awareness, as an instrument for mystifying reality: in other words ('false' myths. 'Our' myth—if one can put it that way—cloaks absence of revolutionary movement with an illusion of movement, or conceals inability to change the real state of things by making do with change in the way this state of things is looked at and named.

Literature is, and has to be, a critique of reality from the standpoint of the chief conditions for man's self-realization. It casts doubt on supposedly universal conceptions of reality, destroys false myth, dispels self-deception; and this cannot be seen as destruction but as socially most important renewal of our sense of reality. Its central concern is to criticize the state of humanity's basic values, which make up the content of socialist humanism. Its aim is to stimulate awareness of human responsibility in the widest sense, both individually and historically, along with incessant protest and agitation against anything that reduces men to mere puppets of fate and of history. The system of values contained in our idea of humanism embraces every form and every possibility of sensual, emotional, intellectual and creative human life. All these are respects in which man, under present conditions and in the middle of this divided and endangered world, falls tragically short of being a man, of the full measure of his true potentialities and needs. This is all material for the critique of which I am speaking. It is a critique that helps us to find our way towards realization of all that can and should be. Socialist literature however must not represent what should be as already existing, but rather as fearfully and painfully failing to exist, yet still an indispensable human need.

But are these factors in themselves enough to explain socialist art's relationship to reality, all its vital functions? If they were, then that art would be unable to transcend the dimensions of reality; it would remain a mere means of analytical recording, and perhaps also a kind of ethical tribunal to judge human ways.

Need literature abandon its hope of reaching beyond the present moment and influencing life as a model of unachieved possibilities and unrealized values? Those who feel that it need not, tend more and more to relate their arguments to the concept of *the modern myth* and the question of literature's mythopoetic power.

We spoke of myth as the expression of a false social awareness. Besides the literary myths which preserve old conditions and conceptions of life there are others, like the utopian-romantic myths of paradise lost and regained, of social upheaval, of martyrs and revolutionary agitators. Such myths proclaim, not the 'law of eternal recurrence', but on the contrary that of eternal change and protest against the existing order. They do not suggest that everything has always been like this; rather they tell men that whatever is, is worth overcoming and changing.

Because those men who are battling within reality to become creators of their own history discover in the process how tragically ephemeral is their activity is, they feel overwhelmingly impelled to identify then

selves and their work with everything that historically preceded their struggle and all that will follow it in the future. This is exemplified in such modern myths as Mayakovsky's poetry or Brecht's great imaginative dramas. They are splendidly destructive of the 'mythology' of false awareness, and at the same time creative of new, wholly earthly and non-religious myths of human hope. Czech literature's greatest creator of myths (along with Halas, Nezval, Olbracht, Vancura) is Jaroslav Hasek, who so brutally demolished the myth of imperialist war, false heroism and spurious military virtues. The good soldier Schweik, operating on his 'insignificant' scale and by wholly unheroic methods, wages a highly heroic battle for ordinary human common-sense against seemingly all-powerful idiocy and bestial absurdity, on behalf of all his contemporaries, and of us his descendants too. On the surface a thoroughly sober, rational and unsentimental myth. But doesn't this happen to be precisely one of the new forms taken by the modern myth, and specifically by the Czech myth, whose subsequent forms and ramifications can be traced down into our present-day literature, e.g. to Bohumil Hrabal?

It would be foolish to confine our search for the mythopoeic aspect of modern literature to those cases where it reinterprets old myths: classical, Christian, oriental. Myths are differentiated not by their themes and subjects, but above all by the attitude they adopt to reality. The wish to transcend the bounds of our own historical period can of course lead to efforts at an illusory flight from history. But it can also mean aiming at the horizon of man's infinitude, at the infinity of human history, of humanity's past and future, its unrealized potentialities and even its impracticable and unfulfillable desires. And that is the possibility which socialist literature has chosen.

Jiri Hájek, the Czech writer, delivered this speech in German at the Frankfurter Forum für Literatur's public debate on this theme in November 1966. Hájek is Editor of Plamen, the principal Czech literary journal.

Acknowledgements

The interview with Jean-Paul Sartre also appeared in *Le Nouvel Observateur*

Louis Althusser's 'Contradiction and over-determination' is a chapter from his *Pour Marx*. François Maspéro, Paris.

READERSHIP SURVEY

The response to our questionnaire has so far been excellent. We urge those NLR subscribers who have not yet returned their forms to do so as soon as possible.

The Communist Party in the 1920'

For the last 46 years the Communist Party has played a part in left-wing politics in Britain out of all proportion to its membership and electoral support. Other left-wing Socialist groups, organizations, campaigns and journals have come and gone. But the continued existence of the Communist Party, despite very considerable fluctuations in fortunes and policies and notwithstanding periodic calls on it from Labour circles to disband, has at no time been seriously in question. Though one or two more or less unsatisfactory short histories and profiles have appeared, it is only now that we have a fully documented study of prolonged period of the party's history. Dr. L. J. Macfarlane's *The British Communist Party: Its Origin and Development until 1929*¹ now painstakingly relates the events of the crucial early years of the Party's life. His chronicle provides an extremely useful record of its internal debates and public pronouncements in this period, an understanding of which is essential for a proper assessment of its subsequent development and role.

Himself a member of the party from 1942-48 he declares his intention in his introduction to approach the subject 'from the point of view of an informed British socialist of the 1920's, accepting the broad principles of Marxism, sympathetic to the aims of the Communist Party but aware of its shortcomings'. In happy contrast to Henry Pelling's hastily assembled study of the party's history—where its members are viewed as a band of British citizens sacrificing themselves in the service of a foreign dictatorship²—Macfarlane sees them 'as part of the British working-class movement, pursuing a policy which in many ways commended itself to left-wing Socialists in the nineteen twenties'.

One-Dimensional History

Sticking very closely to the documentary record, however, he never really succeeds in bringing alive the events (often stirring) and the personalities (many of them very colourful) in the story. Whilst his book was obviously not intended to be on the same plane as the various memoirs of participants, in conjunction with which it should be read, he names in his preface a number of leaders and rank-and-file members of the Party in the 1920's with whom he had long discussions and consultations. His questions to them must have been of a fairly dry, factual nature. My own recollections of talking to some of these people are principally of racy descriptions of incidents and people, full of verve, conveying something of the spirit of the times and the atmosphere in the Party and the Comintern amidst the great controversies. Discussions with Labour Party members of the time as to how they reacted to the Communist Party in these different periods, whether and at what times they thought of joining the Party, and what were the considerations that prevented them, could have provided material for a sociological consideration of why—though Communists were sometimes the acknowledged and respected leaders of hundreds of thousands of workers as in the National Minority Movement and the Unemployed Workers' Movement—the membership of the party in these years never went above the peak of 10,700. (This was the total reached immediately after the General Strike; the average party membership was about 5,000 over the whole decade—nearly seven times smaller than it is today). In the absence of such an approach, designed to show what made the members of the party 'tick' and accounting for the ebb and flow of their fortunes among the British workers at grass roots level, Macfarlane's history, for all its merits and concern for factual detail, remains one-dimensional and incapable of doing full justice to its subject.

The Historical Context

The major weakness of Macfarlane's book is certainly its failure to place the history of the Communist Party in the context of the history of the British working class as a whole in the 1920's, to relate it to the history and development of the other organizations of the Labour movement, above all the Labour Party, and to the political, economic

¹ L. J. Macfarlane: *The British Communist Party: Its Origin and Development until 1929*. Macgibbon and Kee. 1966. 63s.

² Henry Pelling: *The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile*. Adam and Charles Black. 1958, p. 191.

and social evolution of Britain at the time. Some sketch of this background is vital to an understanding of the party's policies and fortunes. Without it the impression is, albeit unwittingly, often created of the party functioning and taking its decisions (or having them taken for it in Moscow) almost independently of the events in the midst of which (and so often in response to which) British Communists discussed and campaigned. (The account of the party's role in the General Strike is largely a happy exception to this). Thus, in particular, the wave of militant struggle developing in 1918-19 on the eve of the party's formation, the capitalist counter-attack of 1920-21 and the outbreak of the world economic crisis in 1929 are scarcely noticed by Macfarlane, and certainly in no way shown as determining Communist thinking and the lines of the party's main public campaigns.

It is strange that in the 'hectic six years' that his publishers tell us he spent as a member of the Communist Party, Macfarlane should have been so little influenced by a Marxist approach to history, the fruitfulness of which is particularly evident in the field of labour history, where such a large proportion of the serious work in Britain in recent years has been by Marxists or those very considerably influenced by Marxism. Macfarlane's book is methodologically analogous with contemporary academic 'Sovietology'—a study of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at the summit in isolation from Soviet society—but without its political bias. This, more than individual errors of fact correctly indicated by some other reviewers but in general of a secondary character, represents the real limitation of the book in rendering a *truthful* account of its subject.

The Labour Party

Like the Communist Parties of other countries, the CPGB was born under the impetus of the October Revolution in Russia and the revolutionary events that shook Europe at the end of the First World War. But unlike most of the others it was not the result of a split in the major socialist party of the country. This was due essentially to the nature of the British Labour Party which developed along very different line from the continental Social Democratic parties. From its inception the Labour Party was a federation of working-class and Socialist organizations and societies. Thus, with the trade union affiliations that have always formed its mass base ensuring that its membership has always comprised a far larger proportion of the working class (and a *fortiori* of the population as a whole) than the Socialist and Social Democratic parties of other countries, its ideological commitment to Socialism even after the adoption of its first Socialist programme in 1918, has remained in practice minimal. Whereas after the Russian Revolution splits in the Social Democratic parties of such countries as Germany, France and Italy, from which the new Communist Parties emerged (some times with the support of the majority of the old party), followed heated debates dividing their leaders and members on which was the correct Marxist policy for the working class, the leaders of the Labour Party remained solidly anti-Marxist parliamentary politicians, whilst the great bulk of the rank and file did not transcend what Lenin called a 'trade union' as opposed to a socialist consciousness. (The deep-seated reform

ism and constitutionalism of the bulk of the British working class—not incompatible with at times exceptionally strong industrial militancy and class feeling—reflect attitudes generated by Britain's former long-held privileged economic position in the world and the absence of any revolutionary upheaval in this country for three centuries which have been major factors restricting the growth of the Communist Party in Britain.

It was therefore not from the political mainstream of the British Labour movement but essentially from a fusion of the small Marxist and semi-Marxist organizations, by far the largest of which was the British Socialist Party,³ that the Communist Party was born. The story of its formation in 1920 and of its early years is largely the story of its struggle to transcend the dogmatism and sectarianism of these early bodies and to weld their former members into a united revolutionary party that would not only be a propaganda society but also a mass campaigning organization integrated with the rest of the Labour movement. Nevertheless since its formation, like its predecessors, it has remained a small minority party in that movement totally overshadowed in size by the Labour Party, although its members have played a very important part in the trade union movement and other working class organizations, providing them with some of their most popular and effective leaders. In this it has taken over and extended a tradition from the Social Democratic Federation (that preceded the British Socialist Party) which despite its sectarianism and political isolation was to furnish some outstanding mass leaders of working class struggle. One has only to think of the role of Tom Mann and John Burns in the Great Dock Strike of 1889 and the rise of the New Unions. Eric Hobsbawm has rightly indicated the importance of the Social Democratic Federation and Hyndman personally (despite his many and varied weaknesses) in helping to secure the assimilation of Marxism by a native working class vanguard who were to provide the Communist Party in Britain with 'a first rate group of native *proletarian* leaders much earlier than many much larger parties of its kind (e.g. Horner, Pollitt, Campbell, Gallacher)'.⁴

Leaders and Intellectuals

The presence of a leadership consisting mainly of industrial workers, sharing the cultural traditions and psychology of the British working class and combining experience in mass struggle with a grounding (albeit somewhat schematic) in basic Marxist concepts gave the new party a notable stability and collectivity of leadership, and saved it from the faction fights that wrought havoc in the Communist Party of the USA for example, during its early years. The dearth of intellectuals, however probably led to a lower level of theoretical debate than in many other Communist Parties and a measure of insularity that has persisted to this day. This has been reflected in a lack of real interest in, and hence

³ Although the BSP had affiliated to the Labour Party in 1916 as an autonomous body its decision to help form the Communist Party can hardly be said to have constituted a split in the Labour Party.

⁴ E. J. Hobsbawm: *Labouring Men: Studies in the History of Labour*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964, p. 237.

understanding of, major debates in the international movement. Thus the controversy with Trotsky on the whole Soviet and international perspective that was to divide the world Communist movement in the 1920's did not cause a ripple in the British party till 1932 when a small Trotskyist group in Balham led by Reg Groves was expelled. The British Party was in general content to tag along with the policies of the Soviet and Comintern leaderships without a deep examination of the issues involved—except where matters of special concern to Britain were involved, as in their protest in 1926 at a statement from the Soviet trade unions condemning the surrender of the left on the TUC General Council in the General Strike.

The Party's Formation

It took more than the general international influence of the Russian October Revolution actually to ensure the formation of a united Communist Party. Macfarlane shows that the tortuous negotiations between the various Marxist groups in 1920–21 would probably never even have begun but for the personal intervention and perseverance of Lenin and the recently formed Third International. Whilst agreeing on the three 'cardinal principles' of the acceptance of the Soviet system, the dictatorship of the proletariat and affiliation to the International, the Marxist groups disagreed most strongly on the questions of the Labour Party and of participation in elections.

The question of its relationship to the Labour Party has always remained a crucial one for the Communist Party up to and including the present day and has been subject to many shifts in appraisal and policy. In the early negotiations to found a Communist Party, the BSP majority characterized the Labour Party as the political organization of the trade union movement to which it was necessary to affiliate and give electoral support, whilst the Socialist Labour Party and Sylvia Pankhurst's Workers' Socialist Federation saw it only as an organization peddling capitalist ideas with which Marxists should have no truck. Lenin, whose advice was to carry great weight with the new party (though it was far from being automatically accepted), was to emphasize two distinct sides of the Labour Party in his estimate of it that still provides the starting point for a Marxist characterization of it today: the bourgeois policies and hence character (irrespective of individual class origins) of its leaders and the proletarian composition of its membership. The characterization of the Labour Party 'as the political organization of the trade union movement' (a formulation that Lenin himself had in 1908 used to describe it⁵) was, he felt in 1920, mistaken. 'Of course', he told the Second Congress of the Communist International, 'for the most part the Labour Party consists of workers, but it does not logically follow from this that every workers' party which consists of workers is at the same time a "political workers' party"; that depends on who leads it, upon the content of its activities and of its political tactics. Only the latter determines whether it is really a political proletarian party. From this point of view. . . the Labour Party is not a political workers' party but a thoroughly bourgeois party because, although it consists of workers, it is led by

⁵ *Lenin on Britain*. Martin Lawrence, 1934, p. 93.

reactionaries.⁶ Since, however, the great need of the British Communists was to get close to the mass of workers who were in the Labour Party, and the example of the British Socialist Party proved that affiliation to the Labour Party could be combined with attacks on the policies of its leaders, Lenin favoured their applying for affiliation.

After a full debate the party's foundation congress that took place in the summer of 1920 decided by only 100 votes to 85 to apply for affiliation to the Labour Party. It also decided by 186 votes to 19 to support parliamentary and electoral action as a valuable means of 'propaganda and agitation towards the revolution', whilst rejecting the 'reformist' view that a social revolution could be achieved through parliament. Even in the absence of affiliation, repeatedly turned down by the Labour Party by large majorities at its conferences, the party decided to support Labour candidates in constituencies where no Communists were standing and call for the return of a Labour Government. Lenin had argued in 'Left Wing Communism: an infantile disorder' that the workers must be helped to see in practice the inadequacy of the reformist Labour leaders in whom they still believed before they could be won for a revolutionary policy. 'Without an alteration in the views of the majority of the working class, revolution is impossible,' he wrote, 'and this change can be brought about by the political experience of the masses only, and never through propaganda alone.'⁷ Such was to remain the basic strategy of the party during the first seven years of its life in which a non-revolutionary situation was recognized to prevail.

R. Palme Dutt

Macfarlane estimates that 4000 people actually came into the Party when it was formed in 1920 (only 2,500 of the inflated 10,000 membership figure of the BSP being represented at the foundation congress), and by 1922 the membership, down to 3,000, 'was rapidly fading away, the finances of the Party were chaotic and the organization had almost broken down', as William Gallacher was to recount subsequently.⁸ On his proposal a Commission was set up from outside the executive to report on the organization of the Party. This was to consist of R. Palme Dutt (Chairman), Harry Pollitt and H. Inkpin. The report had a major impact on the whole organization of the party which had up till then retained the old federal structure of its precursors. The commission was to mark the first rise to prominence in the party of Dutt and Pollitt. At the next Congress they were to top the poll in elections to the Executive Committee.

Here Macfarlane makes the error characteristic of so many outside writers about the Communist Party of assuming that Dutt owed his rise in the party to the sponsorship of Moscow. 'It is difficult to believe he writes, 'that a cold unemotional intellectual like Dutt would have been appointed to the most important position in the party at this time unless he had had (this) backing.' Dutt, in reviewing the book in the *Daily Worker* recently, has hotly disputed this and argued that the con-

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁷ V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, 1938. Vol. x, p. 126.

⁸ *Labour Monthly*, August, 1940.

mission and its report faced continual opposition from the representative of the Communist International in Britain.⁹ In fact it was not difficult for working-class Communists like Gallacher to recognize the talents of the young founder-editor of *Labour Monthly*, whose very great intellectual gifts stood out all the more sharply by virtue of the very small number of intellectuals who belonged to the party in the 1920's. (The party was not capable of making a breach on this front till the 1930's and in fact does not appear to have been particularly concerned to do so.) Macfarlane's description of Dutt as 'cold' and 'unemotional' is at variance with his declared intention to be both 'fair and accurate'. Dutt's remoteness from the life and thoughts of ordinary people and his knowledge only of 'resolutions, theses, ballot results newspaper cuttings,' in the description of a former London district secretary of the party quoted by Macfarlane, should not be taken to mean that he has not always *felt* a hatred of imperialism and an attachment to Communism (and since 1917 to the Soviet Union which he has seen as its embodiment) so great as sometimes even to obscure his intellectual judgment. Barring a purely Machiavellian explanation that does not satisfactorily square with Dutt's personality,¹⁰ this alone can explain the way in the Stalin period that he came hotly to defend and repeat the most phantasmagoric accusations against Trotskyite and Titoite 'agents of imperialism', when a 'cold' and 'unemotional' examination of the charges against known facts and personal experience would have convinced him of their implausibility and falsity.¹¹ A cold Muscovite *business grise* would never have won the enthusiastic support of so many members of the party, which Dutt has had for many years culminating in a rousing ovation at last year's CP congress when he retired from the Executive Committee.

Organization and Performance

Macfarlane gives a fairly extensive treatment of the Organization Commission's report and the subsequent changes in Party Statutes and Rules adopted at the Fifth Party Congress in October 1922. The establishment of stronger central and district leaderships of the party with properly organized departments and a press able to give a quick lead on every issue that arose created an organization that, as Macfarlane says, 'was capable of reacting sharply to any revolutionary situation that might develop and enabled the party, in spite of its small membership, to gain considerable influence over a wide field.' But he notes, equally correctly, that it also led to 'a situation where the membership was asked to

⁹ *Daily Worker*, April 7th, 1966.

¹⁰ It should also be borne in mind that Dutt was not the privileged or powerful ruler of a Communist state, but only one of the poorly paid leaders of a small British party. If he had sought either power, fame or economic advancement, or a combination of all three, his intelligence would have led him to join one of the major parties.

¹¹ An intriguing revelation in a recent letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* (May 5th, 1966) was Dutt's assertion that in 1937 a British Communist Party delegation including himself was 'in conflict with the Comintern leaders over raising questions concerning the conduct of the security organs'. This should not, in my opinion, be taken to indicate an awareness of widespread injustice and overall criticism of the Stalinist purges. This vague formulation in fact refers, I should imagine, to the raising of an individual query or queries about British Communists, notably Rose Cohen, who disappeared in the purges.

undertake too many tasks'. This is something that has persisted ever since and has led to frequently recurring criticisms by party members over the decades. Looking back on what the organization report had produced, the executive report to the Sixth Congress in May 1924 pointed to 'an enormous increase in influence, but little change in the size of the party. These factors, along with over-concentration on the scheme of organization, have resulted in the deterioration in the political quality of the party'.¹² In the pre-Congress discussion Tommy Jackson had gone further and suggested in his usual colourful style that what Pollitt and most of the reorganizers wanted was a party of 'yes men' who carried out party 'leads' at the double. In fact throughout the 1920's discussion in the party and its press was to remain pretty free, with the rank-and-file members and the leaders openly participating in argument about the policies to be followed by the party. It was not until much later that an apparently monolithic leadership was established, the limits of discussion strictly circumscribed and the whole life of the party geared to carrying out the 'line' that was handed down. Signs of the forthcoming crackdown were to be indicated seven years later in the Comintern's letter to the Eleventh Party Congress which criticized *Communist Review* for publishing a 'vicious article' by Jackson in which he had accused the 'ultra left' of 'heresy hunting'. The letter added that 'the direction of the party press must be strengthened through a closer control by the political bureau'.¹³

The General Strike

The Communist Party emerges pretty creditably from Macfarlane's description of its role in preparation for and during the General Strike. The party's membership had grown to 6,000 and the sale of its paper the *Workers' Weekly* to 60,000 by the eve of the General Strike. Despite the imprisonment of 12 of the top Communist leaders in 1925 for periods of six months to a year, the Party used its influence in the nine months after the armistice of Red Friday (July 31st, 1925) to prepare the Labour movement for the forthcoming struggle. Together with the militant National Minority Movement in the Trade Unions which it inspired and led and which now embraced nearly a million workers, it called for wider powers for the TUC General Council, and agreement with the Co-operative Wholesale Society for provisioning the workers on strike, a campaign for 100 per cent trade unionism, a workers' defence corps controlled by the trades councils, a common programme for the whole movement based on a £4-a-week wage for a 44-hour week and the strengthening of relations between the TUC and the Unemployed Workers' Movement (also formed on Communist initiative) to secure the demands of the unemployed and prevent their use as blacklegs.

The attitude of the British Party to the forthcoming general strike was much more realistic than that of Trotsky, who considered that it heralded

¹² *Speeches and Documents of the Sixth (Manchester) Conference of the Communist Party, Great Britain (CPGB)*, 1924, pp. 44-45.

¹³ *Closed letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain from the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International*, reproduced in Macfarlane, op. cit., p. 311.

the coming revolution and warned that there was a danger that the British Communists would 'let slip the opportunity of the revolutionary situation as the German Party did in 1923'.¹⁴ The CPGB's attitude was expressed by J. T. Murphy, then head of its industrial department 'Our party does not hold the leading positions in the trade unions. It is not conducting the negotiations with the employers and the government. It can only advise and place its press and its forces at the service of the workers—led by others. . . To entertain any exaggerated views as to the revolutionary possibilities of this crisis and visions of new leadership "arising spontaneously in the struggle", etc., is fantastic.'¹⁵ In the strike the party called for full support behind A. J. Cook's slogan 'not a penny off the pay; not a second off the day', adding demands for the nationalization of the mines without compensation under workers control, and a Labour government. It urged the formation of Council of Action and a move forward from defending the miners to an offensive against capitalism. 'The Communist Party was the only party or the left to see the political possibilities of the General Strike,' comment Macfarlane, 'and its clear political line was in sharp contrast to the scarcely veiled opposition to the strike from the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party and timidity of the leaders of the TUC General Council.' When the latter called off the strike at a moment of rising militancy, the Communist Party did all it could to keep the struggle going and 'found an immediate response among large sections of workers who felt themselves betrayed.' Its membership increased from 5,000 to 10,730 though by a year later this had dropped by 30 per cent to 7,400, almost exclusively owing to the losses in the mining area where demoralization had set in after the failure of their prolonged and bitter struggle.

Following the General Strike R. Palme Dutt, pointing to the capitulation of the left-wing leaders of the General Council of the TUC to whom the party had looked for a militant lead and to the betrayal by the Labour Party, began to draw conclusions that contained the seeds of the ultra left 'New Line' that was to emerge in 1928 and 1929.

The Left Turn

In the autumn of 1927 the Comintern executive sent a message to the Ninth Party Congress suggesting a review of tactics in relation to the Labour Party. The message did not arrive in time. But some British Party leaders in Moscow in November and December informally talked over the matter with the leaders of the International. A discussion of 'the English question' was fixed for the Executive's Ninth Plenum in February 1928. In the debates in the British Party Central Committee in preparation for this, a clearcut majority (commanding 11 votes) and minority (with six votes) emerged. The majority's thesis propounded at the plenum by J. R. Campbell, argued that mass support was increasing for the Labour Party at the expense of the old capitalist parties and proposed that the Communist Party should continue to work for the return of a Labour Government in accordance with the

¹⁴ *The Communist International*, No. 22, 1926, quoted by Macfarlane, p. 162.

¹⁵ *Workers' Weekly*, April 30th, 1926, quoted by Macfarlane, p. 162.

tactics elaborated by Lenin. The minority thesis of Palme Dutt and Harry Pollitt, with Page Arnot as its main spokesman at the plenum, argued that conditions had changed since Lenin gave his advice and that since 1924 the Labour Party had become increasingly a 'coalition party of the bourgeoisie' which it was the duty of the Communist Party to oppose.¹⁶ The plenum accepted largely the line of the British minority in its final resolution, which was adopted unanimously. (Campbell afterwards in his introduction to the volume published by the Party, *Communist Policy in Great Britain*, which contained the majority and minority theses and the main speeches at the plenum on both sides, wrote: 'Those of us who stood for the old policy in the discussions are not afraid to admit that we were mistaken, that the development of events has convinced us that we were wrong, and that, therefore, it would be cowardice of the worst description to have continued on the old lines.' A self-critical statement in a very similar vein was written by Campbell some 11 years later when he and Pollitt found themselves in a minority in the British party and the Comintern in giving critical support to Britain and France in the war against Nazi Germany. Both statements were certainly sincerely meant at the time—which only goes to show the intellectual pressure exercised by the prestige and 'atmosphere' of the International in getting even the most sober-minded revolutionaries to reject their own better judgment.) The resolution declared that it was necessary for the British party to 'change its attitude towards the Labour Party and the Labour Government and consequently to replace the slogan of the Labour Government by the slogan of the Revolutionary Workers' Government'. The Party would put forward the largest possible number of candidates especially against the leaders of the Labour Party and General Council.¹⁷ The question of whether or not to vote Labour where no Communist was standing was left in abeyance.

The Third Period

That summer the Sixth Comintern Congress was to develop the theory of the 'third period' which European capitalism had allegedly now entered, marking a further acute aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism (a proposition to be confirmed by the world economic crisis the next year) and a consequent 'radicalization of the masses' (a more doubtful proposition especially as the Comintern was to interpret it.) The Congress adopted the Programme of the Communist International which was to be seen as the key document of the world Communist movement and to form a pivot of party education. In it Social Democracy was described not only as counter-revolutionary but also as playing 'a Fascist role in periods when the situation is critical for capitalism.'¹⁸ From this was to develop the increasingly frequent characterization of Social Democratic parties and governments as 'Social Fascist'. The left wing Social Democrats were described by the programme as 'the most dangerous faction in the Social Democratic parties'.¹⁹

¹⁶ *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (CPGB), 1928.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 191–95.

¹⁸ *The Programme of the Communist International*, Modern Books, 1932, pp. 11, 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

The application of this new line was to have particularly catastrophic effects on the development of the National Left-Wing Movement which was formed shortly after the General Strike. Communists played a big part in this organization, the party having recognized till now its importance as a bridge between itself and the increasing numbers of leftward-moving Labour Party members, and as a challenge to the right-wing Labour leadership. It had an important role to play in attempting to make the Labour Party into 'a more effective instrument of working class struggle', as the Plenum of the Comintern Executive of May 1927 still saw the latter's potential role. At the second conference of the Movement in September 1927 there were 163 delegates from 54 local Labour Parties and 40 left-wing groups—representing in all, it was claimed, about 150,000 people. In South Wales the Movement was registering important electoral successes with its candidates receiving 64 per cent of the Labour vote in the rural and urban district council elections in 1928. Support for the movement however, appeared suspect to the then ultra-left faction in the party headed by Dutt who dubbed the Labour Party 'the third capitalist party', and considered that 'the conception of a Socialistic transformation of the Labour Party needs to be denounced'.²⁰ This group believed that if the National Left Wing Movement were to develop independently it was in danger of becoming a new party intercepting people who would otherwise be joining the Communist Party. Such reasoning led to the Tenth Party Congress in January 1929 passing a resolution by 55 votes to 52—against the opposition of the Central Committee—that Party members should leave the Movement. On Communist initiative the movement was then disbanded, doubtless to the great joy of Ramsay MacDonald.

Meanwhile the Soviet Union under Stalin was in 1929 plunging frenziedly into the mass collectivization of agriculture and breakneck industrialization. As this process and the related struggle against Bukharin and the right opposition was stepped up, so were the Comintern declarations on the struggle against Social Fascism and the 'rights' in the other Communist Parties and on the revolutionary perspectives in the capitalist world rendered even more violent, stimulated by the acts of betrayal and anti-working-class violence (especially in Germany) of the Social Democratic leaders and finally by the onset of the world economic crisis in the summer of that year.

The Tenth Plenum of the Comintern Executive in July greatly accelerated the factional struggle in Britain. In his opening speech Manuilsky pointed to the fact that for 10 years there had been no real internal dispute in the British party. (This fact had of course earlier won the CPGB a reputation as one of the best parties in the International.) 'We welcome the solidity of the English Central Committee', said Manuilsky, 'but it seems good to me to make a crack in it now and again, not because we want to split the EC, but to bring some life into its work, to raise its ideological level, to enhance the attention that it gives to the most important problems.' The British party had been too friendly to the British left; they did not have the passionate political discussions that

²⁰ *Labour Monthly*, January 1929, pp. 11-12.

the German and Polish parties had; they were insulated and isolated, a society of friends, not a Bolshevik party.²¹ Manuilsky's reproaches about the ideological level, the insularity and lack of animated political discussion had much to say for them. These things reflected the traditional contempt for theory of the British Labour movement that Engels had commented on, as well as the national characteristics and political traditions of a country that had had no real political upheaval for 300 years and had become the island centre of a world empire. What was regrettable was that the first full-scale controversy since the Party's foundation (the only other one comparable in scale was that of 1956-57 following the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU) should have taken such a distorted form. The influence of the International was effectively used in a way calculated to prevent the questions from being decided on their merits.

The 1929 Election

In the General Election of May 1929 the party's manifesto, entitled 'Class against Class', stressed its opposition to the Labour Party, declared that where there was no Communist candidate standing and 'where the Labour candidate refuses to pledge himself to a programme of fighting working-class demands, the Communist Party advises the workers not to cast a vote for any of the capitalist candidates, Tory, Liberal or Labour.'²² The 25 Communist candidates obtained 50,000 votes compared with 41,000 in 1924 in only six constituencies, whilst the Labour Party, allegedly discredited in the eyes of the 'radicalized' workers, increased its vote by nearly three million and formed the government.

Characteristic of the whole sterile approach into which it had fallen was the party secretariat's criticism of Jack Murphy, often himself regarded as an ultra-left in the leadership, for proposing that an emergency resolution be tabled at the Labour Party Conference demanding that the government release the political prisoners sentenced at the Meerut trial in India. It was no part of the 'New Line', they said, to deceive the workers by asking them to demand anything from the Labour Government. 'The old line was to make the Labour Party and the trade unions fight for the "partial demands" of the working class,' they declared. 'Our new line is that the Labour Party is a completely Socialist Fascist party, that the reformist unions are strike-breaking instrument and that the party must independently organize and lead the struggle on concrete issues.'²³

At the Eleventh Congress from November 30th-December 3rd, 1929 Harry Pollitt, who had become General Secretary in August, delivered the main report. The victory of the 'New Line' was complete. Using for the first time in the Party's history the panel system of election (the Comintern Presidium had in a closed letter to the party's central Cor

²¹ *The Communist International, 1919-1943, Documents*. Selected and edited by Jan Degras. OUP. Vol. III, pp. 90.

²² *Class against Class* (CPGB). 1929.

²³ *Workers' Life*, November 29th, 1929, quoted by Macfarlane, p. 238.

mittee been very critical of the results of 'free elections,'²⁴) the Congress re-elected only 12 of the members of the old executive to sit alongside 23 new members. Among those dropped were Albert Inkpin, former general secretary, Arthur Horner and Andrew Rothstein (who has never since been re-elected to a leading party committee). The political keynote of the congress was given in a resolution stressing the need to step up the fight against the Labour Government which had 'already begun to show clearly its Social Fascist character, namely a policy of Fascism and violent repression of the working class, concealed by legal, democratic and Socialist phraseology.'²⁵

By the end of 1929 the 'New Line' had secured the complete isolation of the party and the decline of its membership to 3,200 despite the opportunities for advance provided by the outbreak of the world economic crisis that the Communists had predicted. Sadly, in August 1930, the *Communist Review* was to comment that 'although we have stood on the line of the Comintern . . . yet the membership continues to fall and the party is still largely isolated from the masses.'

Reasons for the New Line's Support

Was this 'New Line' basically the product of internal forces inside the British party, with its sectarian traditions, in the face of the rottenness of the Labour Party under MacDonald and the increased control of the Labour Party's machine by its right-wing bureaucracy which disaffiliated dissident Labour Party organizations? Or was it the mechanical imposition by the Comintern on the British party of its new international line which, in Macfarlane's words, was 'fundamentally the translation on the international plane of the new left policy of collectivization and industrialization (in Russia) which Stalin publicly proposed in May 1928'? It is to Macfarlane's credit as a historian that his account reveals the complexity of a situation in which both these elements intermingled and coalesced during the two most confused years of the party's history. Whilst indicating that at times 'the initiative in driving the policy of the British Communist Party still further to the left came, not from the Communist International, but from a powerful minority within the leadership of the British party with the support of important sections of the rank and file', he is also undoubtedly right in asserting that 'it was the support of the Communist International for the minority group which led to its emerging victorious at the Eleventh Party Congress at the end of 1929.' This support should, however, not be seen to have operated only on the level of Comintern directives, though these played no small part. The International exercised an important ideological influence through its programme and its analyses. These carried with them the whole prestige of the Soviet leaders, which was to continue to be a vital factor in the international Communist movement after the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943. The outbreak of the world Economic Crisis in the summer of 1929 was moreover to vindicate the *economic* predictions on which the third period line was based. The climate of opinion created in the party by this inter-

²⁴ *Closed Letter*, op. cit., p. 315.

²⁵ *Resolutions of the 11th Congress (CPGB)*.

national line inevitably led an increasing number of party members (and particularly the less experienced members of the Young Communist League), emotionally predisposed to see the line of the Soviet and world leadership as right especially when it promised a more rapid victory of the revolution to which their lives were devoted, to find its confirmation in the events unfolding before them.

Once the new International 'third period' line and the Hunt of the Right Deviationists had got under way it began to gather its own momentum. The YCL, the London District, the Liverpool sub-District and the Tyneside District Committee developed a general attack on the whole leadership. (The Tyneside district even directed their fire at Harry Pollitt as one of 'the right.') This sort of thing often went further than the Comintern desired but it had itself been responsible for unleashing these forces, who, however, had the ground cut from beneath their feet by the clean sweep of so many of the old leaders made at the Eleventh Congress on a scale to satisfy all but the most obdurate ultra-left. (Incidentally an attempt to assess the reason why it was particularly these sections of the movement that swung further to the left would have been of some interest, but unfortunately Macfarlane has not attempted this). Without the Comintern the old line of critical support for Labour would certainly have been called into question and all sorts of sectarian ideas from the past displayed—but only by a minority. The majority would undoubtedly have been more impressed by the solid common sense of Campbell, who again and again pitted his realistic appraisal and first-hand knowledge of the psychology and traditions of the British working class and its Labour movement against the revolutionary pipedreams that Dutt entertained at this period of his life. If the initial arguments had not convinced them, the disastrous effects that the 'New Line' wrought on the party in contrast to the claims of success that its devotees promised for it would have led to sharp changes. But the Comintern and the ideological roots that its new line had sunk in the minds of most of those still remaining in the party prevented this. Macfarlane correctly comments: 'The projected swing of the masses to the left had not taken place . . . but instead of reassessing "the new line" policy the left critics insisted on leading it further along the path of unreality. . . Failure to achieve results must . . . be the fault of those who applied the new line, particularly as they had first opposed it. The critics grew more and more confident as the momentum of the "the new line" carried the Comintern even further to the left'.

The Comintern

Yet the Comintern was not to be written off as Trotsky—after several years of cogent argument against the concept of 'social-fascism' and a united front policy by the Communist parties—concluded in 1935 when he first issued his call for a fourth international. In fact after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany the Comintern went over to a realistic united front policy that led the British party to revise its ultra-left attitude to the Labour party, and to find itself in the 1935 General Election returning to the old line of working for a Labour victory. In the following years the CPGB was to play an important

valuable role in uniting hundreds of thousands against fascism and unemployment.

Even less should the negative experiences of the Third Period be seen as invalidating the advantages of the formation of the Communist International in 1919 and the British party's adherence to it, which Macfarlane describes as 'the only practical basis for a Marxist party in the twenties'. The idea of such a world organization, in which the revolutionary parties all over the world could exchange experiences and hammer out together their line of action, incorporated the basic traditions of working-class internationalism and had the advantage of enabling the more experienced parties, notably the Russian, to help those less well equipped. Certainly in practice this led to the Russians occupying a pre-eminent position in the International, but in Lenin's day this operated, in general, beneficially. The Russians considered it perfectly normal that their party should be as subject to criticism by foreign Marxists as any other—and Lenin himself even invited such criticism. In the various controversies the line-up cut through individual parties and voting at its congresses was by individual delegate not by national delegation—in marked contrast to the controversies in the world communist movement today which are between and sometimes within national parties, each existing in its own, as it were, water-tight compartment and only entitled to approach other parties formally through their executives. There were, of course, dangers in such a centralized international organization as the Comintern. Lenin recognized them at its fourth Congress in 1922 when he severely criticized the resolution adopted at its previous congress on the organizational structure of the parties (on which the 1922 organization report of the CPGB was largely to base itself) as being 'too Russian'.²⁶ As Macfarlane points out: 'If the revolution had spread and Germany had become a socialist country, the whole history of Europe in general and the Communist International in particular would have been very different'. The trouble was to develop when Stalin, having established a monolithic structure in the CPSU, was to use the great influence and standing of the Bolshevik party to extend these methods of leadership to the Comintern, and in the Third Period to carry disastrous policies throughout the world movement.

The kind of atmosphere now prevalent in the Comintern was experienced by the British delegation at the sixth world Congress in 1928 when it opposed the Comintern thesis on the colonies. The British party was the only one there to vote against the resolution on the national and colonial question, (not the major resolution at the Congress but none the less an important one) because it was at variance with the analysis on India, for which the British party had a particular responsibility; worked out above all by Dutt—whose arguments as a specialist on India carried considerable weight in the CPGB. This unique opposition, coming as late as 1928 in an atmosphere in the Comintern which was extremely inimical to the expression of dissent, is indicative of the special position of the British party. Most other parties had earlier been through stormy controversies from which new leaderships had emerged with the approval of Stalin and the Comintern leadership,

²⁶ V. I. Lenin. *op. cit.*, p. 333.

which they could not think of defying. The British leadership had however not changed basically since its foundation and it continued to adhere to the practice of the Comintern of Lenin's day where dissent was openly expressed. This was, however, to be the last occasion that such an anachronism was to manifest itself. Speaking at the Congress, Andrew Rothstein was to refer to 'all the accusations which unfortunately are becoming a sort of mechanical reaction against those who dare to criticize a thesis put forward in the name of the Executive Committee of the Communist International.' The British delegates were to protest about the uncomradely attitude displayed to their criticisms in a 'singular debate' in which 'so large a number of speakers did not know what was the question at issue'. (R. Page Arnot)

On no subsequent occasion were the British (or any other) party leaders to display such independence. In later years, if they had differences with the International, they would normally be of a secondary nature and the top leaders would discuss them with the Comintern leaders behind closed doors—and probably not even report on them to their own central committees, for this might cause 'harmful diversions' when the key need was to 'close the ranks against the class enemy.' It was in the Third Period—particularly in the 1928–29 period—that the British party leaders were to learn to remould their outlook in this Stalinist pattern. This was not due basically to a lack of courage. It did not affect the sincerity with which they worked for the socialist ideal in which they believed, though it did come subconsciously to entail the sacrifice of a measure of intellectual integrity. The judgment of leader and rank-and-file alike was swayed by the fact that they saw the Soviet party led by Stalin embodying the whole rich experience of the most advanced revolutionary movement in the world and achieving success in the Soviet Union which gave enormous weight to all their policies and pronouncements. Many were swayed by the kind of uncritical emotional allegiance that Harry Pollitt was to describe subsequently: 'When the news of the Russian Revolution on November 7th, 1917 came through . . . all I knew was that the workers had conquered, we the top dogs somewhere in the world. That was enough for me. The were the lads and lassies I must support through thick and thin. As don't drop dead with fright when I also say that for me these sars people could never do, nor ever can do, any wrong against the working class'.²⁷ Perhaps there were others who on a more sophisticated plane felt unhappy about one or more aspects of official policy but, realizing the sterile sect existence to which all Communist opposition groups had been condemned, preferred to rationalize their doubts and continue their work in the Communist party which they still saw as the indispensable instrument for the realization of socialism.

The Party's Achievement

As Macfarlane says in his concluding chapter: 'The Communist party for all its faults, had helped to keep alive a spirit of resistance to meek acceptance of hardship and poverty as economic facts of life. Men and women joined the Communist party in the twenties for the s

²⁷ Harry Pollitt: *Looking Ahead* (CP), 1947, pp. 41–42.

reason that they had joined the Chartists in the thirties and forties of the previous century: to secure justice for the down-trodden and the under-privileged.' Although, as he indicates, the spirit was often misdirected, was not the overall record of the Party in its consistent all-round fight against capitalism, its initiative in organizing the unemployed, its championing of the rights of the colonial peoples and the practical assistance of some of its members sent to help organize their struggle greatly superior to that of any other political organization of that time? Can there even be any comparison of the tactical and strategic errors of the Communist leaders—stupid and harmful as they often were, but occurring in the course of this overall struggle—with the policies of class collaboration of MacDonald and the Labour leaders and the vacillations of the left leaders of the ILP and the trade unions? A serious Marxist history of the Communist party still remains to be written. Surprisingly enough only one attempt in this direction has ever been published in this country: Tom Bell's *Short History of the British Communist Party* (1937)²⁸ though some material has appeared in the Soviet Union. In addition to a tendency, characteristic of the Stalin period, to present past events and the actions of personalities (notably those who had subsequently left the party) to fit in with current party attitudes, Bell's book also bears the sectarian hall-marks of his own Socialist Labour Party background. In addition it is also full of factual inaccuracies and is very poorly planned and written. A statement from the party's secretariat at the time, criticized the book as 'gravely unsatisfactory', and acknowledged the urgent need for a history of the British Communist Party. Nineteen years later, in the ferment of a party crisis in 1956, the party's EC took the first practical step in this direction by setting up a commission, under the chairmanship of Harry Pollitt, to be responsible for the preparation of such a history. The work was subsequently entrusted to James Klugmann whose first volume (1920-27) has now been completed, subject to final revision by the author. The Resolutions Committee's report approved by the party's last Congress stated that it regarded the preparation of the remaining part of the history as 'a matter of great urgency', and asked the new EC to make a 'concentrated effort to get it dealt with quickly'. It would appear that the intention is now to publish the different volumes, as and when they are ready, as the personal work of Klugmann rather than—as originally intended—a collective Communist party effort printed after the discussion of drafts by Party members and hammering out of common estimates. However that may be, it is to be hoped that such a history will courageously face all the facts of the past—both palatable and unpalatable—and mark a clean break with the old Stalinist methods of historiography which are still in evidence in the official Soviet and French party histories published in recent years. Only on this basis can it significantly approach and draw lessons from the many perennial problems that still have relevance for Marxists whether inside or outside the Communist Party.

²⁸ A violent review of this by Allen Hutt appeared in *Labour Monthly*, June, 1937, pp. 382-86, the tone, but not the basic content, of which was criticized in an Editorial Board Statement in the next issue.

Dominican Republic:

Revolution and Restoration (part ii) James Petras

The four major political organizations in the Dominican Republic are the *Partido Reformista* (PR), the US financed and directed organization which backed Balaguer; *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* (PRD), the liberal opposition directed by Bosch; *Partido Revolucionario Social Cristiano* (PRSC), the somewhat more reformist, Christian Democratic group; and the national-popular June 14th movement.

The *Partido Reformista* is not so much a party as an organization mounted by US policy makers and whose leadership personnel was largely recruited from the former Trujillo machine; Balaguer himself once being the hand-picked 'President' of the Great Benefactor in the last years. The 'activists' were largely recruited from lumpen elements: the older unemployed or semi-employed 'service' sectors who saw chance to earn fast money and possible employment opportunities. The rural clergy, mostly Cuban exiles and exports from Franco Spain and the military provided informal 'electoral organizations' along with the US directed 'Community Development' organizations.¹⁶ The social forces of this organization were clearly the ruling class—US and national. The party had one aim: to legitimate their *de facto* return to power via US bayonets through 'free elections'. The 'Balaguer machine' never was, nor is today, represented in a party either formally or informally. The *Partido Reformista* was a one-shot deal, constructed for a single purpose and has never developed either a structure, program

¹⁶ US policy makers have been using the 'grass-roots' ideology ('self-help,' 'community development') as a means of competing with the militant leftist and Christian trade unionists. US policy makers use 'community development' as a means of counteracting the hierarchy of power and wealth by attempting to direct popular energies away from a confrontation with the controllers of wealth and power and by securing the nature of the class structure. One militant trade unionist referred to these operations as the 'community corrupters' because the marginal changes introduced attempt to weaken social solidarity that builds organizations for struggle and structural change. The US has not been too effective, since the leaders who have co-opted do not fight to better conditions; they are not leaders selected through struggle, and compromise themselves by upholding 'stability' against popular demands.

or political purpose. The only contact today between the 'activists' and the *Partido Reformista* is the line of job-hunters in front of the 'party' office. In light of this lack of firm political organization it is understandable why the police, army and restrictive legislation are playing such a decisive role. The other side of the coin is Balaguer's attempts to demobilize and atomize the politicized urban populace (ban on public meetings—*Tregua Política*) through restrictions on the parties and a prohibition of strikes and union activity (wage freeze). In addition, of course, these policies directly benefit the social classes which direct Balaguer's policies, strengthening their control and increasing their economic benefits. Together with this policy Balaguer has utilized the plums of patronage to 'co-opt' elements from the right-wing of the PRD—two entering the Cabinet.¹⁷ Thus there is a combined use of repression and co-option to destroy political opposition.¹⁸

The *Partido Revolucionario Dominicano* is a personalistic party, almost totally dominated by Juan Bosch and primarily geared to electoral activity. Though its leaders are mainly middle-class professionals, they are generally oriented by 'modern neo-capitalist' ideas.¹⁹ The electoral base of the PRD is largely composed of the urban poor, the industrial workers, public employees, professional groups, shopkeepers, small and a few larger manufacturers. It lacks a clear ideology, being vaguely for a welfare state, mildly anti-imperialist but with strong links with the strongly pro-imperialist Figueres, Munoz Marin, Leoni groups in Latin America (the self-styled 'democratic left'—neither democratic nor left). The more conservative Party leadership's political position usually predominates in periods of parliamentary activity. And the result is that the class conflicts in society re-emerge in the conflicts between the militant PRD masses and the Party. In 1963 after Bosch was elected, the sugar workers demanded that he live up to his election pledges and deal with their economic needs. Bosch refused even to negotiate until the workers threatened to close down sugar production. Likewise, one factor why the rural peasantry did not run the risk of voting for Bosch was that he never made any gesture to relieve their rural misery as he had promised to do in 1962-63. The Bosch Congressmen are continuing this pattern. Deputy Ambriorex Diaz (PRD-Santiago) recently introduced an amendment to a proposed rural minimum wage law of DR 2 pesos a day giving Balaguer power to lower the minimum wage below 2

¹⁷ The two PRD leaders who are collaborating with Balaguer are Minister of Finance Antonio Martínez Francisco and Minister of Industry and Commerce, Jose Antonio Brea Peña. Both were, and some still say are, on Bosch's national committee.

¹⁸ Bernard Fall has analysed an extreme application of this totalitarian strategy practised by the US in Vietnam. He wrote: 'The new mix . . . is one of technological counter-insurgency—if you keep up the kill rate you will eventually run out of enemies. Or at least armed enemies. Of course the whole country will hate you but at least they won't resist you. What you will get is simply a cessation of resistance—an acquiescence in one's fate rather than a belief that your side and your ideas have really prevailed.' 'This isn't Munich, it's Spain,' *Ramparts Vietnam Reader*, San Francisco, 1966. In this sense US policy had the same goal in the rural areas and among the urban women and older poor of Santo Domingo: the use of overwhelming force produced both an acquiescence as shown in their vote for Balaguer and an undying hatred for the US.

¹⁹ In an interview Bosch bemoaned the fact that in the Dominican Republic the capitalists do not have 'modern' attitudes.

pesos in areas where owners couldn't afford to pay it because of low productive land.²⁰ The PRD leadership defended the profit interests of the small and medium businessmen against the hungry rural workers.

The result is that as Bosch's personal prestige has declined because of his own and the PRD's debility during the coup of 1963 (he refused to prepare or lead the populace against it), the insurrection of 1965 (he asked State Department permission to lead the April revolution while us marines were landing) and the election of June 1966 (refusal to leave his house to campaign), the Party leadership clearly defines itself as a bourgeois collaborationist opposition: its popular base is disoriented or tends to pass on to other more active political forces.²¹ The non-existence of PRD student support, the sharp decline in its trade union support are indicative of the growing disillusion of the more politicized Dominican popular forces with the PRD; these factors may herald a greater exodus.

The *Partido Revolucionario Social Cristiano* is a party overwhelmingly made up of middle class professionals, public employees, small businessmen and students with little penetration in the working class. Its programme does not appear too much different from that of other Christian Democratic parties. However, because of the us invasion there is an anti-imperialist consciousness all too rare among practising Christian Democrats in the rest of Latin America.

Much more dynamic and with a wider influence among the populace is the *Confederacion Autonoma de Sindicatos Cristianos* (CASC), the Christian Democratic-led trade union movement. The CASC, probably the largest and most influential confederation at the moment, has grown considerably both in members and militancy because of its active participation in the armed resistance against the us marines.²² CASC leaders like Henry Molina and Francisco Santos played important roles in directing the revolutionary commandos. Though the CASC is an ideologically oriented union and is in working relations with the PRSC there is a definite 'syndicalist' tendency in their orientation to the working class: in practical terms unionism is conceived as the major vehicle for mobilizing and defending working-class interests. They are both militant and 'reformist'—militant in confrontations on economic struggles and less clearly defined on the large political issues—except on the question of the us presence. The revolution and the invasi-

²⁰ *Litina Diario*, August 24th. Similarly William Nova Rosario, PRD-Independence opposed overtime pay.

²¹ Bosch himself admitted in so many words that the PRD lacks a programme under the present circumstances in the Dominican Republic. He now looks for a solution not in mobilizing the labouring populace but in a future electoral victory by Robert Kennedy. While quite bitter about the Johnson interventionist policy, he tends to minimize the role of Balaguer as an instrument of us policy, discussing Balaguer in personal rather than social terms ('Balaguer is not of the Right but his forces are of the Right') thus perhaps justifying the collaboration in the Cabinet. Interview with Juan Bosch, August 25th, 1966.

²² The strength of the CASC appears to be growing most rapidly in the countryside where they have 60 to 80 unions organized in the FEDELAC (Federacion Dominicana de Ligas Agrarias Cristianas). The Education Director of CASC pointed out that the trade union schools have been more and more oriented toward training rural organizers.

caused the older conservative Catholics both in the PRSC and CAS to leave,²³ with the result that those who remained and the new members recruited during the struggle have strengthened the 'militant' wing especially in the CASC.

The combativity of the workers who form the cadres of the CASC is tempered by their strong commitment to Catholicism, and through this channel comes the major anti-communist influence. The single most important factor preventing these workers from turning their anti-imperialism and class consciousness into a revolutionary socialist commitment is their ideological links with the Catholic hierarchy and doctrine. While liberal Catholic spokesmen encourage trade union activity and organization, the overwhelming stress is on working with Western progressive liberalism, militant anti-communism and avoidance of popular mobilizations for social revolution.²⁴ The necessities of the armed struggle appear to have had the effect of overcoming some of these factors, but the more conservative influences may emerge again in the coming period.

The June 14th movement originated as a dynamic student-based movement organized for the overthrow of Trujillo in the late 1950's. It was led by Manolo Tavarez. The plan was discovered and the revolutionaries were tortured and executed. As a result of this the June 14th movement became a symbol of the resistance to Trujillo and grew rapidly in the period soon after Trujillo's fall. Under the influence of the Cuban Revolution, the leadership took a turn toward guerilla warfare after Bosch was overthrown and many of the top leaders including Tavarez were killed. As the movement defined itself as a supporter of the Cuban Revolution, sectors of the professional middle class defected; with the sudden turn away from mass struggle to guerilla warfare the leadership lost contact with important popular sectors in or around the movement. However, since 1963 the June 14th movement has again been growing rapidly in numbers and cadres.²⁵ The June 14th movement is the major force in the universities, and it appears increasingly influential in the second largest trade union FOUPSA-CESITRADO. The April Revolution and the armed resistance accelerated the influx of new members; new recruits were largely from the impoverished lower middle class (self-employed, artisans and low-level public employees). The major social force in the June 14th movement is this radicalized lower middle class; the dominant orienta-

²³ One right-wing off-shoot group the Partido Demócrata Cristiano (PDC), later supported Balaguer during the election.

²⁴ During the three phases of recent Dominican political history, the Papacy and the Dominican hierarchy took somewhat different approaches. The overwhelming majority of the Dominican clergy sided with Balaguer, the Dominican ruling class and the US. The Papal Nuncio Emanuele Clarizio attempted to 'mediate' between the conflicting forces and during the elections the Vatican took the position that Catholics could vote for any of the candidates. Discussion with the Papal Nuncio Clarizio gives one the impression that he tends to favour a moderate Social Christian position and is less favourable to a total commitment to the Balaguer forces. Recent shifts in the hierarchy have strengthened these moderate liberal elements (the appointments of Bishop Roque Adams and Juan Antonio Flores).

²⁵ Bosch estimates that the June 14th movement had 800 followers in 1963 and has 12,000-15,000 followers today.

tion is radical nationalism with a focus on the expulsion of all US influence and the expropriation of the foreign investors. In recent months there has been intense discussion in the movement on basic political and ideological questions: analysis of the present period, the revolutionary social classes, the nature of Dominican society and the strategy for taking power.

Rafael Taveras, a leader of the June 14th movement, sees the petty-bourgeoisie becoming a revolutionary force—because of its growing impoverishment and the limits imposed by US imperialism. Concerning the immediate programme of the movement, he points out that they hope to mobilize the large explosive sector of unemployed young workers and sons of the lower middle class. Taveras's orientation seems to revolve around mass mobilization politics; at the same time there appears to be a group within the movement which is considering guerrilla warfare in the countryside. Such an orientation would be disastrous for the June 14th movement, given the relatively unpolitical nature of the countryside and given the existence of a revolutionary consciousness among broad layers of the urban populace. The combination of nationalism and urban mass politics presents the most fruitful perspective for immediate gains—barring wholesale political assassinations.²⁶ The restrictions that Balaguer will impose on the functioning of the parliamentary opposition and on the reformist trade unions should confirm the revolutionary perspective of June 14th and create a wider audience for a revolutionary political viewpoint. Taveras points to the few possibilities for democratic reforms in the Dominican Republic and hence projects the future perspective in terms of 'Revolution or Dictatorship'. The major weakness of the June 14th movement has been its internal heterogeneity, ideological vagueness and lack of working-class cadres. As a movement it is a movement of young men—average age 25 years. In recent months it has been moving closer to class politics—especially in the light of the insurrectionary experience. Its militants view the limits of the revolution and their own shortcomings in terms of their inability to organize the major mass force in the revolution, the urban working class. According to Taveras the working class formed the backbone of the revolution but lacked the class party to direct the struggle, and hence the revolutionary energies were dissipated by the parties of the middle class (PRD, PRSC).²⁷ Ideological clarification and the con-

²⁶ A sector of the Balaguer coalition, the Military Police Intelligence (map) and the Air Force want Balaguer to act more forcefully against the opposition. This group has begun to intensify their plotting. Signs reading 'Wecan Si Balaguer No' and 'Balaguer es comunista' are generally the work of this group. These ultras are said to have a list of 5,000–6,000 'communists' that are to be 'eliminated'. The fear which the PRD has of this group appears to be one reason for their collaboration with Balaguer.

²⁷ It is imperative that a revolutionary strategy recognize that in the Dominican Republic the revolutionary movement of April 1965 took the form of a classic social revolution rather than rural guerrilla warfare: an armed uprising emanating from the urban centres and based to a large degree on the trade unions, the urban unemployed and the university and secondary students. In Santo Domingo the high urban unemployment rate, the cleavage in the traditional basis of elite power (the Army) and the availability of a highly mobilizable urban population provided the opportunity for an urban based mass insurrection. The presence of an external occupation force exacerbates all the latent hostilities generated by externally sup

solidation of the organization appear, however, as a necessary prerequisite to the success of this organizational task.

Of the two small communist parties the *Movimiento Popular Dominicano* (MPD), the pro-China group, appears the more active, and has influence in the June 14th movement. The *Partido Comunista Dominicano* (PCD), pro-Soviet, is much smaller and tends to orient its activities toward supporting the 'progressive' sectors of the PRD, accusing the more militant June 14th movement of being 'petty-bourgeois socialists'.²¹ Neither group is an effective mass force, and both only have limited influence on the mass through coalitions with the other parties, especially the June 14th movement. The lack of cadres, the lack of ideological sophistication of their new members and ideological divisions plague both groups. Recently the MPD split into two factions, both publishing a journal with the same name, *Libertad*, virtually indistinguishable politically. While the MPD and PCD grew as a result of the revolution and its aftermath, the great majority of the newly radicalized populace entered into the more dynamic national-popular June 14th movement.

With illiteracy still over 60 per cent, unemployment at least one-third of the labour force of Santo Domingo (300,000-500,000 out of a population of 3.5 million total population), 400,000 peasants lacking sufficient land to live on, with 200,000 school age children out of school and with drinkable water available for five out of every three hundred campesinos, the need for proposed structural changes is obvious. The re-emergence of the old ruling class, the restoration and strengthening of the old piratical military-capitalist caste by the US can only serve to set the stage for a new confrontation. Balaguer's restrictive legal measures are aimed at limiting and containing the challenge of the organized forces. Meanwhile, as Balaguer's promises of reform turn into political assassination and price rises, the popular unrest tempered by the US onslaught is slowly beginning to mobilize its strength. Behind the seeming acquiescence and fear there is in the popular consciousness a profound hatred of the totalitarian military and their US counterparts.²² There is a growing maturity in revolutionary political consciousness among the trade unions, the political militants and the young unemployed. The balance sheet of US policy in the Dominican Republic indicates that the 'stability' so brutally imposed is a transition to a new confrontation.

ported national-capitalist exploitation and provides a unifying theme—anti-imperialism. In this sense the Dominican Revolution resembles the European Resistance movement during the Nazi occupation.

²¹ *El Popular*, August 8th, 1966.

²² US white and Negro soldiers were equally brutal and equally condemned. Black Dominican workers told me that when they told North American Negroes to go back to the US to fight for their own rights the Negroes responded, 'will you pay me \$400 a month?' Conservative civil rights spokesmen who advocate 'coalition' with the Democratic Party in order to obtain promises of improvement in the immediate economic position of the North American Negro cannot and do not offer any effective political challenge or opposition to their 'coalition' partners, i.e. LBJ, or crucial foreign policy matters. On the contrary it is not unusual for Negro leaders to support this policy as can be seen by Bayard Rustin's testimony on the US controlled elections in the Dominican Republic. No one put it better than Staughton Lynd when he said 'coalitionism' today is 'coalition with the Marines'.

work

Between blue and white collar, the technician in white overalls often occupies an ambiguous position. Better than most he knows—as in the following case—the technical quality of the company's products; yet his recommendations go unlistened to or are torn up. His concern for the product is unlimited; yet it must make way for modern marketing techniques. His ambition is to rise in the company hierarchy; yet for that he delays getting married . . . CBF is 31, and is presently working on a study of the Food and Agricultural Organization.

White Overalls

Soon after leaving agricultural college I was offered a job as an instructor in a training school run by a large farm-machinery manufacturer. I took up the offer gladly, having decided, in common with many other students, that I wasn't suited to practical farming, and wanting to make a career in one of the many industries connected with agriculture. The Company, a recently formed amalgam of a small British firm with a large North American one, ran the school principally to train personnel from its distributors, both in Britain and abroad, in the use and maintenance of its products. But it also gave free instruction to large numbers of people from all over the world who had no connection with the Company other than a need for knowledge of its equipment.

Most of these students were sponsored by their governments, or by organizations like the Colombo Plan, and they were usually government employees of one sort or another, perhaps working on some pilot scheme, or engaged as agricultural officers. Some of them took a ver complete course lasting three months, but others came for shorter special courses in tropical agricultural machinery. Most of the British students stayed for two weeks. Total student throughput was about 2,000 a year, and there were about twenty instructors.

The school premises were an old army camp in some 300 acres of land. When I arrived the place was still a shambles of dreary huts and bracken, brambles, and bare earth where the students had been practising with the machinery. But a development plan was soon in action: huts were knocked down in large numbers, and those left were gutted and lavishly laid out with offices, lecture rooms, machinery halls, fil

rooms, and individual oil-fired heating plants. Roads were built, lawns laid out, and trees planted. The expense was vast—probably in the region of £½ million—and to many of us it seemed futile to carry out such a development scheme on rented property. We felt sure that for a similar sum the Company could have bought a large farm, erected the necessary buildings, and then run the farm as a commercial enterprise and as a model for visitors. But it seems to be axiomatic that from a lowly position within a company the ways of that company appear obtuse.

One of the main characteristics of the original British firm was that its founder and head considered that he and his products had a messianic role to play in combating world hunger. His inventions were certainly revolutionary, and they were manufactured to a very high standard. Many people have said that to work for that firm was like being engaged in a crusade; and Ron Topping, under whom I trained, was one who felt this. An ex-RAF pilot who had been badly disfigured in an accident at the end of the war, he had joined the British firm before the amalgamation. Trainee instructors, like myself, who came under him soon took on the sense of purpose that he attached to the job, and they were also bound by the spell of his unlimited enthusiasm. His loyalty and sincerity were unbounded; his credo was accuracy and honesty; he was totally devoid of cynicism. He spent long periods coaching and questioning me on all manner of obscure detail in connection with the equipment. In my digs at night I spent much time typing out notes, reading instruction manuals, and memorizing the welter of data that an instructor needed to know. Inspired by him I threw myself wholeheartedly into the job, even though I was not dependent upon it: my mother's death shortly before had made me financially independent, but my interest in the work was in no way diminished, for I considered it to be a job with a purpose.

After a few weeks I began to give an occasional lecture, and within three months I was given a course of my own. Most instructors trained for 5–6 months, but the work that I had done in my spare time had made my progress more rapid. I graduated into white overalls when I took my first course, for there was in the Company an 'overall' hierarchy. At the bottom of the scale were the brown overalls of the workers in the factory a few miles away and of the field-test department. These were followed by the plain white of the demonstration department; the blue of the students at the school and of the trainee instructors; and at the top of the scale were the white overalls with coloured cuffs and collar, and Company emblem on the breast pocket, of the qualified instructors.

But despite our position at the top of this hierarchy, we never thought that we would make any real progress in the Company until we had sloughed our overalls and cast aside our spanners, such was the division between technician and executive.

I was extremely ambitious, and there were, in fact, good opportunities for instructors to progress into the executive sphere, where our intimate knowledge of the Company's products was considered a great asset.

My own aim, like that of several others, was to join the Export Sales Department. I spoke two foreign languages, and my chances therefore seemed good. But there was one difficulty that beset most young instructors with Export Department ambitions: it was acknowledged that there existed a bias against taking on married men. Several of us had already met the girls we wanted to marry, and we used to discuss at length the wisdom or otherwise of doing so. In the hope of an Export Department appointment a few of us delayed our marriages; and it was two years before I got my priorities right and married the girl I had met at agricultural college.

The school was run on service lines, doubtless because the administrator was an ex-naval officer, Captain Bond, a big, bald gruff man. On Friday afternoons he carried out a tour of inspection in preparation for which the implements in every building had to be lined up to a hair's-breadth. And for months the 50 or so tractors in the School were left out day and night because he liked to see the neat line they made, even though there were buildings in which they could have been hidden away and protected from the elements.

For all his idiosyncracies, he was a man who stood by his subordinates and would argue for our rights in the high councils of the Company. In addition, he never interfered with the way we ran courses.

On the whole I enjoyed instructing. For the type of students we had, my lack of general engineering background was probably an asset: I was forced to explain technical points from a common-sense viewpoint, rather than from that of a specialist, which so often confuses the layman.

But the beginning of a course was always an ordeal. I would start to be apprehensive on Sunday evening, and I detested the first few hours on Monday morning. The dozen or more faces into which I looked as I stood on the platform in the lecture room always appeared stony, even hostile, and I suppose that my tenseness made me appear equally hostile to them. In those early days I took pride in following the tradition of Ron Topping, trying to be as accurate as possible, and firmly resisting the temptation to bullshit when I was asked a question that I couldn't answer properly. This wasn't a matter of honesty alone: I had quickly learnt that it was politic to admit ignorance and find out the answer, rather than take the risk of having a statement exposed as incorrect later. One even collected some kudos by the occasional admission of ignorance.

Socially and racially the school was always a mixture; the instructor themselves ranged from old-Etonians to ex-mechanics, but relationships between them and the students—and among the students themselves—usually seemed excellent on the surface. I can remember only one unpleasant incident when a white agricultural officer from East Africa made some derogatory remark about African tractor drivers, and a African was immediately on his feet to protest that, if it was so, it was because they had been badly taught by the whites. Judging by the rapidity and generality of the acrimony that followed, I have ofte

thought that there must have been strong but suppressed undercurrents of feeling on most of these multi-racial courses, particularly on the large ones of short duration, because on these there was little chance for individuals to get to know each other.

Like the other instructors, I often went for weeks on end without taking a course. During these periods there were usually odd jobs to be done, people to show around, or whenever possible I would take a tractor and plough out to work. Ploughing is a satisfying and exacting art, but one that needs much practice if it is to be done well. In general, though we were grossly under-employed, and for me this was a source of creeping disenchantment. Life within the school was almost too comfortable and easy, and I was often dissatisfied at the way my time was being fruitlessly employed.

Fortunately, the work of an instructor was not confined to the school. We were expected to carry out lecture tours, and to give advice and technical assistance both in Britain and abroad. It was these sorties into the outside world that first caused me to realize how sheltered and easy the life was in the school. I was sent on tours of the British Isles during which audiences of 500 or more farmers sometimes attended individual lectures, and here, on their territory, I was open to complaints and criticisms about the equipment—of which there were many more than in the sequestered atmosphere of the school, I had imagined.

At this time the company was in a state of flux. The British firm had not been fully integrated into the North American one, and two separate product lines were still being marketed. As I have said, the products of the British firm, with which I was mainly concerned, had had an unusually high reputation for quality engineering before the merger. But in the school, the employees originally of the British organization maintained that the merger had brought about a lowering of the previously high standards. The staff that had originally been with the North American firm replied that without the merger the British organization would have been out of business long since, so unprofitable had been its marketing of high quality equipment in recent years.

There was certainly some truth in both points of view, but, because I had come so much under the influence of Ron Topping, I took the side of the British part of the Company, even though I had joined after the merger. The almost blind faith in its products that Ron had instilled in me received a severe jolt when I began to move among the customers.

Hostile questions and reproaches about failures in the machinery were frequently hurled at me in the question period after a lecture. There were even such elementary and infuriating weaknesses as a new tractor model that would not start on cold mornings. I soon learned to sidestep such issues with agility, or to make some half admission of a element of truth in the allegation in order to get myself off the hook without incriminating the Company. By this time Ron Topping had left the Company to work for a distributor abroad, so I don't know how he would have reacted in such circumstances; but certainly the

scrupulous honesty that I had inherited from him was fading fast in the face of such difficulties.

On my trips abroad I came into even closer contact with customers, for my job was to visit farms and plantations in order to advise and give technical assistance. I spent as much as 3-4 months at a time in Yugoslavia, in Madagascar and other islands of the Indian Ocean, and in Portugal. These periods often gave me great satisfaction. At least I was never under-employed while abroad, often the reverse. In 4 months in Yugoslavia I had only one free day. My time was spent travelling thousands of miles in the main agricultural area, the Vojvodina, answering queries, helping tractor drivers to get the best from their equipment, organizing demonstrations, and supervising the delivery and installation of new tractors. There were minor irritations, of course, mainly those brought about by the immovability of the Yugoslavs when an urgent job was at hand, but I felt nevertheless that the work was vital and in a sense productive.

The more under-developed the country the more acutely I felt this, and I had one particularly satisfying day in a remote village in Madagascar. The population had saved for a long time to buy a tractor and plough, but on my arrival I found the three-furrow plough stripped down to a single furrow, and the tractor parked in a shed while the people were tilling by hand. The head of the village told me sadly that the equipment was unsuited to the conditions: the tractor would only pull a single-furrow plough, and it was therefore uneconomic. I suspected at once that they had been using the hydraulic controls of the tractor incorrectly, so I spent a day rebuilding the plough and teaching them to use it in the fields. Their delight, their touching if impractical gift of fresh eggs as I was leaving, and above all, the sight of the tractor and plough rapidly turning the rich soil of the paddy fields made me aware that in a small way something of value had been achieved that day.

But there were frustrations too on these journeys abroad, many of them in our relations with head office. As instructors we were on loan to the Export Department who wanted to use us and our knowledge in an ambassadorial and what they termed 'trouble-shooting' role with the customers. Although personnel from the Company's distributors and agents were usually active in visiting farms and plantations, we were frequently the only employees of the Company itself that ever got beyond the cities and the distributor's offices. I was certainly the first Company employee ever to carry out a protracted tour in Madagascar, and the majority of farmers expressed pleasure at having someone from the manufacturer visit them on their isolated farms to give advice and look over their machinery.

The trouble was that, while heaping us with responsibility, management gave us insufficient support to go with it. Frequently I wrote reports about matters that needed urgent investigation or attention, usually without any result. Once I was asked to choose a distributor for the Company's products on an island in the Indian Ocean. This was, of course, outside my normal sphere of duties, but I spent several days in investigation and analysis before making a decision. In my report

particularly emphasised the need for a speedy settlement of the matter because the firm on the island wanted a nucleus of equipment for the next sugar harvest, 5 months hence. I even arranged with an established distributor on a neighbouring island to ship equipment from there in order to save time. I repeatedly raised the subject with management, but two sugar harvests later nothing had been done, simply because the Company had not even signed the agency agreement; and this despite the fact that management had approved of my recommendation and told me what a sound job I had done. They may have had their reason for delaying—apart from inefficiency—but if so they were never explained to me or to the firm on the island. Incidents of this nature made me increasingly indifferent: why should I bother if nobody else did? My enthusiasm and concern were being steadily ground down.

I was far from being alone in finding the indecision of management stultifying. It seemed, in general, that the middle-strata managers with whom we came into direct contact shrank consciously from making decisions in case they should make a wrong one and invoke the wrath of top management. And top management did the same because they feared the wrath of corporate management in North America.

As instructors, our contacts with management were unique for spanner and-overalls men. Before every trip that I made abroad, the manager or director to whom I was to be responsible would call me in for a briefing. And while abroad, particularly in Yugoslavia, I met many directors and managers who came to Belgrade on short visits. On such occasions they were always affable and friendly. We would spend one, or even several evenings together; but it was quite common for me to meet one of them back in England a few months later, and not only would he have forgotten my name, but he would not even recognize me sufficiently to say good morning.

Of course there were exceptions to this, and it was very noticeable that North American management was more approachable than British. When I had been with the Company about three years, many key positions in Britain were taken over by North American executives. This followed a drive for efficiency launched by the corporate board with a series of sackings and purgings in which men who had been with the Company for many years suddenly found themselves out of a job. So widespread were the sackings that a Company definition for an optimist was coined: a long-service employee who arrived at work in the morning with his lunch-box.

The North American executives who came to Britain were young and usually ruthless, but in my contacts with them I noticed that they had far more human approach than British executives when dealing with people in lowly positions like mine. Once introduced to me none of them ever forgot my name, or passed me by without pausing for an instant to exchange a greeting or perhaps a word of praise for some recently completed assignment. When I viewed this approach rationally I came to the conclusion, possibly a cynical one, that it was a deliberate and studied technique in labour relations. Nevertheless, I think it is a rare character that does not respond when the big bosses, whom I

seldom sees, use a friendly, interested approach, and always call him by his first name. Even though my reason told me that these things meant nothing, I still found that my emotions responded.

But the direct North American intervention had a major effect on the school and on my attitude to my job. It soon became obvious that the purely technical courses we gave were unsatisfactory in the eyes of North American management. The money invested in the school was producing no hard cash return, and therefore a sales bias was introduced. The instructors were subjected to courses in the psychology of selling, and we were expected to be very sales conscious in the courses that we gave. This new policy I found totally incompatible with the old one of accuracy and strict honesty. My opinion had always been that the old policy was indirectly very successful in furthering sales: given good machinery in the first place, the student left the school with as complete a knowledge of it as possible — even of its limitations if any. He was then able to use it and look after it to best advantage, and his success with it, and faith in it, would advertise the Company's products.

And even in dealings within the Company the new attitude gagged us and prevented the dissemination of accurate knowledge. On one occasion there had been criticism from farmers about a certain aspect of our tractors' performance; so, during one of the many weeks at the school when several of us had nothing to do, we took two tractors from the Company's range, one small and one large, and tested them scientifically in the field.

The tests showed that the criticisms were without basis, and as no tests of this nature had been carried out before we embodied the results in a report for circulation within the Company. A coincidental feature of this report was that *pro rata* the small tractor appeared slightly superior to the large. But this was only so at a superficial glance, and anyone who read the report properly would see that some special circumstances of the tests were responsible for this relative showing of the two models — a relative showing that was in any case quite immaterial to the real results that we had obtained.

The report was circulated, and within 24 hours we were arraigned before the North American executives. They said that the small tractor was already selling much better than the large, and that our report merely put the large tractor further into the shade. The report had therefore to be recalled at once and every copy destroyed. No mention was made of the true and worthwhile objective of our tests.

Such incidents were the final factor in destroying my youthful and probably misplaced idealism. My long hope for an appointment abroad had been repeatedly frustrated. There had been countless rumours of vacancies arising, and on two occasions management called me in to tell me that I was to be offered one; but nothing ever came of it. Once, as a result of the work I had done in Madagascar, the South African branch of the Company offered me a job based in Rhodesia. The offer came to me via head office, but no one could tell me anything about the terms, living conditions, or anything else of importance. The only

point they did clarify was that if I accepted the job I would have to resign from the Britain-based Company and join the South African. The implication was that I would be putting myself into a backwater from which there might be no chance to return to the main stream.

Captain Bond pestered me continually to know whether I was going to take the offer, until, on about the seventh day after it had been made known to me, and while I was still trying to find out more about the conditions, he called me into his office and said: 'I've decided for you. You're not bloody-well going!'

In some respects I was a little relieved to have the decision taken out of my hands, for the job did have some drawbacks. But I resented Bond's high-handed action. Perhaps to make amends, he promoted me within the school shortly afterwards. I then spent nearly a year in even greater inactivity than before; most of my time was taken up with crayoning the beautiful and elaborate programme charts that Bond liked to show his superiors in order to impress on them the efficiency with which he ran the School. Tired of crayons, disillusioned about loyalty, convinced that sales techniques now took precedence over quality, I finally indulged my boredom and resigned to set out on my own.

CB

MARXISM

100 Years In the Life of a Doctrine

Bertram D. Wolfe

Karl Marx was without doubt the most influential intellectual figure of the 19th century; his disciple, Lenin, changed the course of the 20th. Today in the new nations of Africa and Asia, leaders act and speak in their names. Moscow and Peking pugnaciously espouse their own rival versions of the doctrine.

In this new volume, Bertram D. Wolfe, already known for his classic *Three Who Made A Revolution*, studies the intellectual history of the past century through an analysis of the programmes of Marx and Engels and of their disciples.

The study is built around a series of questions concerning the meaning of Marxist doctrine in theory and in practice: What was original Marxism? Was it nationalist or internationalist? Did it affirm defensism, defeatism, or pacifism? Democracy or dictatorship? Was it science or Utopia? The author investigates the documents of Marx and Engels, both public and intimate, and the acts by which they proposed not merely to interpret history but to shape it. Bertram D. Wolfe provides an invaluable work for all who seek an understanding of the history of our era.

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**Chapman
& Hall**

discussion

On Juliet Mitchell's

'Women: The longest revolution' (NLR 40)

In NLR 40 some thirteen and a half thousand words, rich in quotation from Marx, Engels and Lenin, from Louis Althusser, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Talcott Parsons, were used by Juliet Mitchell to back up her advocacy of four reforms: equal education, free state provision of oral contraception, legalization of homosexuality (strange demand in an article on women, considering that it is only *male* homosexuality which is illegal in Britain: and why should Cuba be singled out for Juliet Mitchell's indignation?), and the abolition of illegitimacy (just like in Sweden and Russia!).

These reforms are of course unexceptionable, excellent measures, measures which anybody from the Liberal Party leftwards should support. But however does it come about that after all the work and thought that clearly went into Juliet Mitchell's article, and despite the correctness of its underlying premise—that is to say, that the whole area she sets out to discuss has been neglected shamefully in socialist thinking—that nonetheless the result is so banal and falls so far short of her intentions. There is clearly nothing wrong with Juliet Mitchell's intentions. But I think that there is something very wrong indeed with her basic assumptions and her method, and it is that which explains both the anti-climax of her conclusion and many of the inconsistencies in the article as a whole. It is because the subject is one of the utmost importance that it is necessary to analyse carefully where she goes wrong.

In the first part of her article, Juliet Mitchell criticizes the 'economist approach' of the classical socialist writings on women—that is, their discussion of them in terms of the family, and of their participation in economic production. She writes: 'the position of women in the work of Marx and Engels remains dissociated from, or subsidiary to, a discussion of the family, which is in turn subordinated as merely a pre condition(!) of private property. Their solution(!) retains this overly economic stress, or enters a realm of dislocated speculation'. This initial rejection structures the whole article.

We are warned that the article will not provide an historical narrative of women's position. But what, in fact, happens is that she *excludes* history from her analysis. How can one analyse either the position of women today, or writings on the subject ahistorically? It is this which prevents her from realizing that the whole *historical* development of women has been within the family; that women have worked and lived within *its* space and time. We may all agree that her place should not be there, but it is. Any discussion of the position of women which does *not* start from the family as the mode of her relation with society becomes abstract. Furthermore, human history is based on production and relations of production. This is equally true for men and women and hence the 'economist' approach of Marx and Engels is *the basis* for discussion of the position of women. What specifies the position of women in history until the industrial revolution is that her participation in production was mediated through the family.

However, the Marxist tradition can and should be criticized for its failure to understand the specificity of women. Juliet Mitchell's instinct is correct here, but since she does not define their specificity in socio-economic terms she falls into simple empirical description. The Marxist tradition can be criticized in particular for its mistaken identification of the social role of women, in treating them as if they were class; for workers or peasants are exploited actively, at their place of work, while women's subordination is a passive one—they are appropriated together with other property. The central weakness of her whole analysis is that she bases it on ahistorical categories: fundamental, marginal, etc.

Her own article is, in fact, itself an unwitting proof that it is impossible to achieve a global analysis of the position of women *outside* the premises of classical Marxist discussion. For her discussion too moves from the family (sexuality, socialization, and reproduction) to productive work. Failing to situate women historically in socio-economic terms, her position remains the traditional feminist one, which is in its essence moralistic: the history of women is presented as a sequence of oppression by the male sex.

Because she sees the whole question in terms of men oppressing women it is not surprising that she does not understand the emphasis that Marx and Engels placed on women's work in industry (summed up in the excellent passage from Engels which she quotes with disapproval on p. 14-15). Surely the difference between a woman-worker and woman-peasant is that the work in the first case is dissociated from the family and is *socially* hers.

Women are not oppressed by men—they are *socially* oppressed; the distinction is methodologically essential, even though the two in fact coincide. The totality of the exploitation of women transcends the relationship with men and the appropriation of their work. At the beginning of her article, Juliet Mitchell claims that women cannot be exploited like other social groups, since they are essential 'to the human condition'. This is not good enough, for it is equally true that workers are essential to capitalists, peasants to landlords, etc.

'The reasons for the historic weakness of the notion (of the family) is that the family has never been analysed structurally—in terms of its different functions. It was a hypostasized entity: the abstraction of its abolition corresponds to the abstraction of its conception.' Thus she sets up her structures in opposition to the 'abstract' notion of the family in Marx and Engels: and, not surprisingly, in doing so she loses the notion of the family altogether. Her method is more than a method—it demonstrates her whole ideological orientation. She divides women's condition into structures, so that the particular 'combination' of these constitutes at any moment that condition. This method is not a movement of the parts to the whole and back—not at any moment does she provide a totalizing synthesis, so that even in her conclusion the structures remain separate. The result is not only non-Marxist (that is, non-social, ahistorical), it is also sterile.

'A revolutionary movement must base its analysis on the uneven development of each, and attack the weakest link in the combination.' When one looks more closely at the structures, what does one find? The advent of the industrial revolution should have liberated women, but it didn't; the relaxation of sex taboos seems the weakest link, but is actually absorbed into the fun-ethos of the capitalist market; the socialization of children used not to be woman's primary role, but today it is. To understand how all this has happened, that is to unite all these structures into a meaningful totality, one needs history. Having failed at the beginning to explain the *social* (in contrast to individual) subjugation of women, and since her analysis does not bring her any nearer to such an understanding, she finally falls into reformism.

Juliet Mitchell's refusal to connect women as a social group historically with the family leads her to odd conclusions both on the past and on the future. Her discussion of the experience of post revolutionary Russia is an example. In fact, the liberalizing laws of the October Revolution did not in the first instance signify the sexual liberation of women, but rather the abolition of the family. However, Juliet Mitchell tells us: 'Women still retained the right and obligation to work, but because these gains had not been integrated (1) into the earlier attempts to abolish the family and free sexuality, no general (1) liberation has occurred.' This explains precisely nothing about what went wrong with regard to the question of women in the Soviet Union. And as far as the future is concerned, her suggestions fall comfortably into the domain of the English liberal tradition—against all her intentions. Thus women should not necessarily be mothers, but only if they wish to; the family should be merely one option among others, but at the same time should remain a social institution; equal education, contraceptives, kindergartens, should be made available. As if women *choose* to be mothers! To restructure society so that such a choice would be possible, one would have to go further than Juliet Mitchell ever imagines.

The family used to be an economic unit—today it is not. On the basis of this, she suggests that the idea of the family being a form of private property is incorrect today. Because she does not understand the concept in the writings of Marx and Engels, she equates no family with: state of common property—and uses a quotation from Marx incorrectly:

to make the point (p. 35). She does not see, therefore, that merely to replace monogamy by a plurality of marriages is to retain private property relations in the future socialist society. (The idea that the abolition of the family could be by-passed by changing its form is analogous to Proudhon's scheme for workers to buy the whole of France out of their savings, which he understood as abolishing private property: see Engels' letter to Marx in Selected Correspondence p. 34.) But Juliet Mitchell never admits that the family is a form of private property—hence she contrasts administrative measures with free choice, the social with the individual. Thus she says that 'any society will require some institutionalized and social recognition of personal relationship', without explaining who requires that, and why. And although she does recognize the family as a social institution, she really sees marriage in our society as a free choice of man and woman, she confuses the relationship between the sexes with marriage.

But all this flows naturally from her ahistoricity, or rather from her evolutionist standpoint. Society becomes a 'long passage from Nature to Culture', and socialism is defined (!) by the unity of equality and freedom. In this view of history and society, Marx might never have existed.

What one can ultimately hold against Marx and Engels is that they were not more interested in women, that they did not see the question of women's position as being very important (which is why they give them a merely symbolic value whenever it comes to the point). But if they were wrong in failing to understand the importance of the emancipation of women to the class struggle, Juliet Mitchell certainly does not make any clearer why this was.

Perhaps I should make it clear that my concern is not primarily with methodology: it is with the problem of the emancipation of women. The history which could provide an analysis of the position of women and a context for their emancipation (politicization) is not some Hegelian concept—it is a concrete history which still largely remains to be written and made. And this history can only become concrete if its basis is the class struggle, subsuming feminism and at the same time transcending it. It is only within the praxis of a hegemonic movement that it is possible to pose 'demands' which cannot be absorbed by the existing ruling class—i.e. which are not reformist.

Quintin Hoare

Juliet Mitchell writes:

It is difficult to take issue with Quintin Hoare's criticisms of my article. He seems to have totally misunderstood my work, largely to have misconstrued the application of Althusser's theses, and at least partially to have failed to see the meaning of a crucial area of Marx's thought. It is pointless for me to rebut every random charge and correct

each misrepresentation of my points. It seems more worthwhile to restate my argument and then to confront the major substantial disagreement that underlines his refutation of my analysis and proposals.

However, I cannot reiterate my position without first rejecting the assumption of Quintin Hoare's final paragraph—the separation of methodology from content. I consider that the two are correlatives in any theoretical argument. In fact, Quintin Hoare's earlier remarks would confirm this: 'Her method is more than a method—it demonstrates her whole ideological orientation.' Indeed it does. In defending the content of my analysis I am, *ipso facto*, defending the method and vice-versa.

My thesis is that women are confined within the family which is a segmentary, monolithic unit, today largely separated off from production and hence from social human activity. The reason why this confinement is made possible, is the need for women to fulfill three roles; they must provide sexual satisfaction for their partners and give birth to children and rear them. All three roles man shares with other mammals. This confirms De Beauvoir's contention that women are relegated to the species while men—through work—transcend it. The world of production into which women can and should assert themselves, surrounds the family. Hence my assertion that the economy is *dominant*—but only in the final instance. What I see as innovatory in my article is the attempt to differentiate the separate structures which make up the family and my proposals that follow from this differentiation. Here I take issue with Quintin Hoare but not with Karl Marx.

Marx never saw the family as an unalterable 'whole'. I quote: 'One cannot, in general, speak of the family "as such"' (*The German Ideology*). But Quintin Hoare seems to want this: 'This method (of differentiating women's condition into structures) is not a movement of the parts to the whole and back—not at any moment does she provide a totalising synthesis, so that even in her conclusion the structures remain separate. This separation of structures is precisely my point. Bourgeois ideology provides us with a unificatory concept—"the family". A socialist strategy for women should try to disrupt this monolithic unit and the way to do this is to keep its structures (the women's three roles) distinct; to prevent their integration into a single unit—the family. My method is in content. To ask for 'a return from the parts (the structures?) to the whole (the family?)' is to ask for a confirmation of the ahistoricity of the bourgeois concept itself. If this is not a Hegelian demand, what is? It is useless to try and counteract the ahistorical nature of this position with an assertion that what is needed is an historical account of women's historicism (there are anyway a number of historical accounts of women through the ages) is here merely the other side of Quintin Hoare's ahistorical conception.

I would then totally disagree with Quintin Hoare in seeing the family as an undifferentiated whole. My concern is with women and why some may fulfil all three roles that make up the family others may be involved in one or none. To differentiate it is to allow for variability while maintaining throughout an awareness of its unitary form.

strategic concern is with a separation of its functions. Three of the four randomly selected reforms that are pilloried in Quintin Hoare's first paragraph are illustrations of how the *process* of separation could be set in motion, not ends in themselves. The fourth—equal education—is a part of another demand, omitted by Quintin Hoare '*the right to equal work*', which is seen as correct strategy within the world of production. To label my article as 'reformist' is completely to misconstrue the term. Reformism is the proposal of ameliorative demands *which have no connection* with a larger strategic concern for liberation; the 'reformist's' suggestions *are* ends in themselves. In my penultimate paragraph I attack the monolithism of contemporary marriage and the family and propose the diversification of social relationships which are compressed into this institution. I write 'this would mean a plural range of institutions—where the family is only one, and its abolition implies none. Couples living together or not living together, long term unions with children, single parents bringing up children, extended kin groups etc.—all these could be encompassed in a range of institutions which matched the free invention and variety of men and women.' Quintin Hoare somehow understands this as a proposal for 'replacing monogamy by a plurality of marriages'. This misreading makes it redundant to correct a number of serious misconceptions and confusions towards the end of his criticism.

So much for this part of his misunderstanding of my article. There is a further substantial point underlying his disagreement. Quintin Hoare criticises me for 'never admitting that the family is a form of private property'. I don't admit it, because I don't think it is. It is a *means* for the retention and attainment of private property and so is the woman within it. But not unless women are literally exchange products can they be *identical* with objects and property. Industrialism *does* separate the family from its earlier immediate associations with the economy and this separation prevents in any case the total coincidence of the family and private property. It seems that Quintin Hoare is asking us to analyse the position of women in preindustrial conditions. Elsewhere he confirms this preoccupation: '... the "economist" approach of Marx and Engels is *the basis* for a discussion of the position of women. What specifies the position of women in history *until the industrial revolution* (my italics) is that her participation in production is mediated through the family'. To concentrate on this preindustrial area—even assuming the hypothesis is correct—would be to write history with a vengeance.

reviews

Bill Jenner *History in the Manufacture*

As China grows in power and revolutionary achievement the Western world begins to take her history seriously. Chinese studies, particularly in the USA, have developed from an eccentricity to an industry. The American government, in its role of world gendarme concerned to strangle or corrupt popular revolutionary movements, has poured enormous sums into research on every aspect of modern China. The temptation to dismiss nearly all the work thus produced is one that may be indulged in without great damage to an understanding of China or excessive injustice to the career men who churn out tedious books and articles, based all too often on the work of the helots who translate and analyse the material for them in Hongkong or the USA. It is rare that an American scholar (to use the term by which they designate themselves) has any real understanding of what the Chinese revolution has been all about, though there are honourable exceptions. There is no American academic treatise I have yet seen that gives half so good an introduction to 20th century Chinese realities as Edgar Snow's classic *Red Star Over China* or the passionately committed books of Agnes Smedley. The Chinese revolution has been made by the struggles of real people, not by organizational techniques and conference resolutions.

Even though Professor Fairbank was an American government PR man in China after the Second World War, Professor Reischauer has recently finished a spell as US ambassador in Tokyo, and both men have openly supported the Vietnam war they cannot be fairly regarded in quite the same terms as many of their colleagues. They do at least know their subject and know it well where the history of the ruling classes in China and Japan is concerned. In the first volume of their history¹ of East Asia they gave a useful and readable introduction to the American interpretation of the earlier periods, and in this sequel they give us full, heavy-footed and scholarly version of US imperialism's myth of the modern era.

The rough equality of space devoted to China and Japan despite the enormous difference in size between the two countries is not accidental: we are clearly meant to make a comparison between the right and the wrong way for an Asian country to modernize. Japan's record

¹ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer, Albert M. Craig: *East Asia, The Modern Transformation* (Volume Two of *A History of East Asian Civilization*). Allen & Unwin, xvi and 955 pp. 84s.

fascism and aggressive expansion is presented as an unfortunate mistake in the development of a healthy capitalist democracy.

China apparently failed to make the correct responses to Western 'stimuli', which is why it now is doomed to suffer under the wicked Communists. It is also significant that a lot of attention is given to Western doings, and very little to the peasants, the vast majority of the makers of modern Chinese and Japanese history. In contrast to the shocked treatment of the killing of some hundreds of foreigners in the Yi Ho T'uan troubles of 1900 the atrocities committed by foreign troops before as well as after the siege of the Legation Quarter are omitted, as is the systematic extermination of the peasants in large areas of Kiangsi province by Kuomintang troops when they overran the Red bases. The reader will find no explanation of why Christian missionaries and converts were often hated by ordinary Chinese people, no serious discussion of the hideous cruelties of agrarian landlordism. Class struggle, a concept without which modern Chinese history is meaningless, is carefully played down; the term is, in the reviewer's memory, used only once, and then in inverted commas. The picture of traditional village society is the standard American myth, complete with the scholar-gentry, an elite open to all on academic merit, providing leadership and performing good works. Fairbank's description of China since 1949 reads rather like a *Time* magazine account.

The chapters by Reischauer and Craig on Japan are probably better than those on China. Japan, after all, has not committed the sin of revolution, and can provide consolation for America's Chinese failure. All the same, one would have liked more attention to the numerous peasant risings that accompanied modernization in exchange for a little less detail on the factional struggles within the ruling group.

It might have been better if the sections on South-east Asia and Korea, both sinocentrically dealt with under the chapter-heading 'The Peripheral Areas,' had been written by specialists. Unfortunately this is bound to become a standard work on its subject, if only because other general histories are much worse. Let us hope that its reign will be a short one.

Dr Michael Loewe's handbook² on what might or might not be called the feudal period of Chinese history—the two millenia or so before the 19th century—is a model of professionalism. Instead of writing another chronological narrative he has taken a number of topics and devoted a chapter to each of them. Each chapter is made up of short sections some two or three paragraphs long that summarize the modern western view of the subject in question. His chapters on the growth of cities, political organization and economics are among the best introductions to these aspects of traditional China available in English. Agriculture, the peasantry and war are the most serious gaps in Dr Loewe's coverage, but then there are limits to what can be dealt with in 300 pages. One might also quarrel with some of his generalizations as not always

² Michael Loewe: *Imperial China: The Historical Background to the Modern Age*. Allen and Unwin. 325 pp. 45s.

applicable, and object that his view of Chinese history tends to be that of the high official. All the same, even if this is not quite adequate as a history of pre-modern China as a whole, it is an excellent survey of the traditional state structure. With this qualification it is a new standard work that can be welcomed.

Owen Dudley Edwards

Reporters and Liberals

This linked-up anthology of *New York Times*¹ news reports and magazine articles was published in the United States in 1964. It has, of course, already 'dated'; but while the present edition makes no effort to offset this, Anthony Lewis supplies a new foreword, the point of which seems to be that Britons should buy and read this book now that the discovery of race prejudice in Britain has made it timely. The introduction is also notable for the truly startling conclusion that the murders of Mrs Viola Liuzzza and the Rev. James Reeb 'inspired action against the ancient pattern of racial violence in the South', viz. that 'a Congressional committee investigated the Ku Klux Klan, exposing many of its violent activities'. Fine words for innocent Englishmen unsullied by the information that the committee in question was the violently anti-libertarian, witch-hunting House Committee on un-American activities which has in the past done much in an effort to destroy civil rights activities, and whose investigation of the Klan may well form the alibi for further such attacks on integration movement. Injury to Klan members is likely to be small, since in any case most of them now find it more convenient to join other similar organizations.

But neither Lewis nor his original book is to be rejected out of hand. The American staff reporter (as opposed to the American syndicate columnist) is, on domestic issues, a far more reliable source than generally recognized. He is blinkered on matters that call for understanding beyond the basic structure of his ideological frame of reference; his more perceptive work is often 'spiked' (Mr Lewis has somely draws our attention to one such instance); he cannot run too far afoul of editor's and publisher's prejudices; and, in the so-called 'news magazines', his work will generally be mangled beyond recognition and systematically drained of any value it may have. But he has industry, and a strong hatred for dishonesty, injustice, and political hypocrisy of the more obvious kinds. He takes pride in his toughness and therefore is often at bottom very much of a sentimentalist.

¹ *The Second American Revolution*. A first-hand account of the struggle for Civil Rights. By Anthony Lewis and contributors to the *New York Times*. Faber & Faber, 35s.

The stories reprinted in this volume do their work well in conveying the character of some of the more significant and appalling events of the decade in 1954-64. Lewis, to his credit, has read widely to provide the needed links. The drawback is, of course, a certain lack of understanding of the background to events before they became news and available evidence has changed accordingly. Lewis wags an admonitory finger at the Negro protesters in Cambridge, Maryland, in July 1963, whom he claims 'marked an early corruption of the protest movement'. His discussion of it, and the supporting news story, take no account of the pattern of white violence on the Eastern Shore, where Cambridge is, nor of the devious racialism of that area's loyal son, Maryland Governor Tawes. Violence exploded and the Negro leadership's lack of moderation is at fault. Full stop. On to the next chapter. If I had not had the fortune to have worked on the Eastern Shore myself in the battle against segregation, I might have been tempted to swallow the persuasively-presented argument. As it is, I have to record that Eastern Shore Negroes in the neighbouring Chestertown first adopted a militant posture when a number of them stood between civil rights workers and a pursuing mob of drunken white thugs. The Negroes in question were apparently ready to respond on this occasion with violence. In fact they were not called on to do so. The mob cringed before them. As a pacifist, I don't like violence. As a veteran of Chestertown, I don't hold in high regard the assumption that its outbreak in Cambridge must be laid at the door of the Negro leadership.

Elsewhere Lewis is more perceptive. He has given a grim account of the legal delays and paraphernalia with which the Negroes have had to battle; of the savagely high bails and trumped-up arrests, the judicial breaches of law and the police efforts to understudy the Gestapo. As his story ends in 1964, and is in any case presented in fragmentary form, he rather fails to draw the logical conclusion, which appears clearer to readers of Sally Belfrage's *Freedom Summer*, a narrative by a victim of the law's delay and abuse, one of whose co-workers was Stokely Carmichael. Indeed, Lewis's shortcomings are of value to us, being those of American public commentators generally (and, notably, of Professor Daniel Bell, whose highbrow 'too-far-too-fast' admonitions in these pages to Negro leaders lacking in consensus-mindedness go far to explain Negro impatience and irritation with white liberals). Lewis pleads touchingly for the Negro to 'go on following the course that has brought him so far in what seems to others so short a time—the course of reason and restraint'. But his own very honest pages make it quite clear just how short a distance the Negroes have indeed been 'brought' in 100 years.

My personal beliefs probably lie more with King than with Carmichael. But neither Lewis (I assume) nor the *New York Times* nor the racist mobs and law officials nor President Johnson share a belief in pacifism. Why, then, is this to be made medicine for the Negro and for him alone? Apart from any other consideration, the degree to which the ideal of violence for one's presumed rights in Vietnam and elsewhere is deluged upon the American public to saturation point, makes it virtually inevitable that Negroes should consider the application of sauce for the gander. Again, much rude comment is made against

'Black Power'—Lewis would clearly have made some himself were not the most recent lines by him in this work dated 'March 1965'. We are told that 'moderate opinion' might be alienated, and here come the pollsters to prove it. Every step forward, as Lewis does not tell us, has evoked this response: Montgomery bus boycott, freedom rides, sit-ins, the Birmingham demonstrations, the King boycott of Alabama and so on. The 'moderate', once success for the disputed tactic has been assured, firmly applauds it and prepares to condemn the extremism of the next move. And on the Congressional level, every minute concession granted by some curmudgeon legislator (for which he usually exacts more than his pound of flesh) becomes a great victory to the 'moderate'. Radical steps must not be proposed lest this gain be lost. There was plenty of this in evidence when the 1964 Civil Rights Act was going through the House, with sub-committees gallantly seeking to create equal voting procedures in all elections only to have the committee of the whole restrict such legislation to federal elections only. The committee giveth, the committee taketh away, blessed be the name of the committee. No doubt the answer is that, apart from alienating Congressman Bloggs, apart from the difficulty of getting justice out of the national legislature, it might be unconstitutional. Carmichael happens to think that if protection for human life and equality of rights and opportunities cannot be found within the Constitution, the Negroes must acquire them for themselves. What ever Lewis may say against this view, his book seems to support Carmichael's point rather neatly.

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short notes

John R. Alden: *Pioneer America*. Hutchinson. 30s.

Pioneer America is a survey of the British North American colonies and the United States from 1607, when the London Company established a colony at Jamestown, Virginia, to 1865, when the Civil War ended. Obviously the author has set himself an immense and difficult task; even so, the difficulties recognised, it must be confessed that this book is a disappointment. Other than a few conventional pieties about the hardships confronting colonist and frontiersman, little sense of the real experience, the real problems, drives, and conflicts, the unreal but potent myths of Pioneer Americans is communicated. In retrospect, *Pioneer America* seems almost a misnomer; this is just an old-fashioned tale of personalities ('Stephen Austin, a scholar, a performer upon the flute, and an introvert, was also intelligent, generous-minded, and honest'), legislation at Government level, battles, and belligerent escapades.

Professor Alden writes as a dedicated Anglophile: 'In a sense, in 1776, the Americans were more English than the English, for they had inherited their allegiance to the cause of freedom from the noblest traditions of the Mother Country.' His politics are those of an old-style patrician democrat: 'Social revolution was also to be feared; in the old south 'Alas, there were more of those shiftless, degraded, and ignorant folk than there were patricians.' Those 'ignorant folk' are the 'poor white trash' at whom he takes continual swipes from a safe, liberal vantage-point, without making any concerted attempt (momentarily, on page 196) to discover how and why these whites became 'poor' and 'trash'. Gross generalities abound: 'Englishman in [the eighteenth] century were usually satisfied at home.' Any jabbering conscience about white treatment of the Indians is hushed by the possibility that the natives' gift to the newcomers, syphilis, 'balanced all the wrongs inflicted by all the whites upon all the Indians of the Americas'.

Says the blurb, Professor Alden 'has not hesitated to give more space to literary genius than to political mediocrity'. Unfortunately, he demonstrates neither understanding of the social forces affecting literature, nor ability to assess literary achievement. The criticism seldom rises above the level of 'on occasion Poe wrote truly glorious lines'. Whitman 'composed crude, banal, pretentious, and even meaningless lines:' yet, of course, he 'could, when it pleased him to do so, write splendid conventional poetry, as he did in "O Captain! My Captain!"'

In his preface Professor Alden hopes that his book 'will not drive away readers, whether academic or lay, because of gross deficiencies in style'. In that context the whole work reads like an American College textbook: 'However, there were those who believed that Boston, falling behind in quantity of citizens, retained quality.' There is an extraordinary lack of verbal economy in a work where compression surely ought to have been a primary virtue: 'The trains tended to run from east to west and west to east, rather

than from north to south and south to north.' Gruesome figuration is everywhere—of Sylvester Graham, a primitive dietician: 'Ought not the preserver of the alimentary canal be gratefully remembered along with the builders of the passageways at Panama and Suez?' Of Melville and Whitman: 'There were two Americans descended from early English and Dutch immigrants, who dedicated themselves, not to the pursuit of priests and nuns, but to that of poetry and prose.' With regard to his puns, an example will serve better than any further comment: General Grant was 'not to the manor born'.

Incidentally, English socialists may like to learn that they have for some time been living in 'a socialist monarchy'. Knowing this, they will not be surprised to discover that the principal challenge to the contemporary United States is the 'rising tide of Communist despotism'.

Of course, there is plenty of information in *Pioneer America*. It can be recommended to readers of this journal for a bird's-eye, distorted view of American diplomatic, military, and legislative history; but for little else.

H.B.

Paul Klee: *On Modern Art*. Faber 7s. 6d.

This essay, written for a lecture in 1924 but not published until 1945, is from Klee's Bauhaus years (1921-31). It continues the theoretical examination of the basic elements of his pictorial art begun in his 'Creative Confession' (1920). He analyses the dimensions of a picture—line, formality, colour—showing how in each there is a wide range of possibility for variation. A picture, like a piece of music, is 'a phenomenon of many simultaneous dimensions'. He emphasizes the importance of integrating these in the whole composition, and, in common with other Bauhaus artists, stresses balance and formal design. The analysis of elements and the achievement of pictorial equilibrium leads him away from naturalistic representation. But for Klee abstract form is not an end in itself. Particular linear and formal combination suggest movement or stability, agitation or calm, flight, hovering, falling and so on. His graphic invention continually throws up rudimentary shapes—bird, flower, man—not imitated from nature but rediscovered through the intrinsic process of composition. His work is a search for universal images like ideograms: 'One must go from type to prototype'.

Klee relates his art to a dynamic conception of the natural world. The artist sees nature as process, not finished product; 'he permits himself the thought that the process of creation can today hardly be complete, and he sees the act of world creation stretching from the past into the future. Genesis eternal!' The artist's work is to transpose the creative process into terms of human activity, not to imitate the visible surface of things: 'The artist must be forgiven if he regards the present state of outwards appearance in his own particular world as accidentally fixed in time and space.'

What is missing in Klee's theory is that, seeing man's creativeness as continuation of a natural process, he makes no allowance for what is different about specifically human activity: critical self-consciousness. The artist's search for formal purity is more than a realization of something that also occurs in nature; it is a qualitatively different kind of activity.

Nevertheless Klee's analysis of the precise means of formal expression makes this essay of central importance.

The reissue of the text in paperback form, illustrated with 24 drawings from

different periods of his work, will enable it to be widely read. It would be a good thing if Klee's other writings were as easily available.

M.P.

Max Jacob: *Lettres à T. Briant et C. Valence*.

Max Jacob, who died in the Nazi camp for jews at Drancy in 1944, lead two lives: as a surrealist poet and Montmartre dandy, and as a religious recluse in a village in the Loire valley. His city life seems to have filled him with feelings of guilt, remorse and disgust of social life. He retired to the country in 1921, and again in 1936, becoming more and more obsessed with astrology and catholic mysticism. (He wonders whether they are compatible). These letters reflect the second side of his life. His quietism, revealed in a preoccupation with astrology and occultism, his compliant attitude to authority, and his religious obsession with suffering, humility and guilt ('a sense of sin is indispensable for any intellectual or moral progress') seem to have been reinforced by a crushing hopelessness about contemporary events. Taken away to Drancy by the Gestapo, he almost welcomed it as a kind of martyrdom. The tone of abject resignation is not entirely unrelieved—there is humour and irony, and some acute self-observation and insight. The correspondence will be important for a full picture of Max Jacob's complex personality, and it illuminates the psychology of one kind of withdrawal from contemporary reality.

M.P.

The Reactionaries: W. B. Yeats. Wyndham Lewis. Ezra Pound. T. S. Eliot. John Harrison: D. H. Lawrence. Victor Gollancz.

This is a very bad book on what may or may not—we do not yet know, for it has not been formulated—be an important subject. It would hardly deserve a notice at all if it hadn't been given much space by reviewers who have not said how bad it is, and what mysteries surround it.

Harrison's ignorance is so extraordinary that one is bound to wonder when the book was written, and where, and what Harrison has been doing all these years, that he hasn't read the most obviously relevant material. The book was published in August 1966. A bibliography lists 128 items. Of books or essays published after 1960 there are five: Yeats's *Essays and Introductions*, 1961; C. Cross, *Fascists in Britain*, 1961; R. Albrecht-Carrié, *Italy from Napoleon to Mussolini*, 1962; Gilbert and Gott, *The Appeasers*, 1963; Malsky, *Who Helped Hitler*, 1964. Whatever Harrison has been reading since 1960 (and we could go earlier than that date), he hasn't been reading about the authors he is discussing. On Yeats he lists—and this might surprise even undergraduates—Ellman's *Identity of Yeats*, Monk Gibbon, Hone, Menon, who is in fact the authority he most often quotes. A further mystery here: in the chapter on Yeats Harrison does mention Conor Cruise O'Brien's celebrated essay on Yeats's politics, but whether he is referring to the shortened version in the *New Statesman*, or the full version, in *In Excited Reserve* (1965), we do not know, for Harrison does not even bother to mention the essay's title; and anyhow reading it hasn't done him much good. Geoffrey Wagner's book on Wyndham Lewis is certainly not, I imagine, the last word; but we have a right to suppose that someone engaged with Harrison's subject should know it—little has been written on Lewis, anyhow; and Wagner might have helped Harrison to find out something more about right-wing writers than he knows. On Hulme Harrison lists nothing at all: he does not even know Sam Hynes's edition of *Further Speculations* (1955). On Pound nothing at all. Which may explain why in August 1966 we find Harrison (p.33) proving that Pound knew Hulme. . . A dramatic moment this. As this is the state of Harrison's knowledge Cyril Connolly's gentle murmur that Orage and the *New English*

Weakly have been overlooked is over-sophisticated. To continue in this vein would be boring. A competent supervisor of undergraduate essays would have stopped the whole thing.

I.G.

Philip Callow: *In my own land*. Photographs by James Bridgen. Times Press. 35s.

'The world wasn't our creation, it was full of work and curses, it clanked, it was stinking with petrol . . . we didn't want to adapt ourselves to that crazy gang—anyway we didn't seem to know how to.' A romantic refusal which runs through Callow's vivid descriptions of flight from Midlands factory and clerical work to an artist's (and eventually successful writer's) refuge in Cornwall. But in 'Up the Line', the best of these discontinuous autobiographical descriptions, he discovers a man, a writer in Nottingham who is 'sure, sure of one thing—England belongs to him'. A subjective certainty which Callow pursues through others in his attempt to discover his own land where (in his final words), 'I'm not cheated; no more than anyone else. If I'm deprived, nobody's doing it but me. It's all happening, going on. I'm in the thick of it.' Callow's intense prose is beautifully counterpointed by Bridgen's photography.

R.F.

Diana Spearman: *The Novel and Society*. Routledge and Kegan Paul 40s.

The only motive for reviewing this book, which, with its illiteracies, its *non-sequiturs* and its total lack of any basic critical skills, should never have been published, is that people might be misled by the false pretences of its title. So here is the core of the last paragraph: 'For example, it seems clear that too close an identification of literature and society must be an obstacle to its wide enjoyment. If people are told that in order to appreciate a great writer it is necessary to understand the society in which he wrote, many busy scientists and technicians may decide not to bother, and many housewives and factory workers may feel that it is all too difficult for them.' Admittedly this isn't a conclusion, because this is the first we have heard of all those busy scientists and so on; it's just tacked on as an afterthought. But it does show the general banal level of argument, and the pervasive complacency of the assertions (I would never dawn on Mrs Spearman of course that there might be ground for dispute, that it could be said that all those busy scientists may regard literature as a frivolity they can't afford).

This quotation also demonstrates the false pretences of the title. For M Spearman is mainly concerned to show that there isn't much connection between the novel and society. This could have been valuable, at least if she had concentrated on demolishing the mechanical 'middle-class' theory of the rise of the novel. But she simply hasn't the equipment for doing this. For one thing, it is not always clear when she is attacking. Sometimes it seems to Ian Watt, but in a discussion of Richardson, for example, she doesn't even mention one of Watt's most important points about the connections with Lockean epistemology.

There are worse faults. She thinks puritanism is synonymous with dissection, that sociology is synonymous with social determinism. She relies heavily and indiscriminatingly on secondary sources, with little direct engagement with the primary material. . . . But, in the words of Chandler, the American critic who devoted several books to the genre, . . . 'she writes at one point as a conclusive proof against a point made by an unnamed 'modern critic'. And footnote indicates that Chandler was writing in 1899! (This reverential evocation of 'authorities' is pervasive).

Mrs Spearman has never been trained as a literary critic. Or even as a clear thinker: 'One feature of Chrétien's writings is *intensely* realistic—the dialogue. Of course this is difficult to assess . . .' (My italics). The preface acknowledges the help of Karl Popper.

J.G.

John Bayley: *Tolstoy and the Novel*. Chatto & Windus. 35s.

It would be fair to say that the theoretical framework of *Tolstoy and the Novel* is not materially different from Bayley's early book *The Characters of Love*. Tolstoy is the greatest novelist because 'he takes for granted and conveys with overwhelming assurance the authenticity of the individual vision'. Indeed the major claim for Tolstoy is that he is more than a novelist, that, at his greatest, the conventions of genre (including that of 'realism') are irrelevant to the reader's sense of the 'life' that he conveys.

The questions that raise themselves are not different but are more emphatic than those raised in my essay 'Character and Henry James' (NLR 40). Isn't Bayley using Tolstoy as a comforter of his own liberal theory? Comforter, that is, because so often we feel that Bayley's initial assumptions are emotional and incoherent, that the axiom is dissolved in a puff of epigram. Does this, for example, really mean anything: 'Tolstoy and Pushkin possess their characters though they do not control them: with Dostoevsky it usually seems the other way round'? Or is it really being pedantic to query this: 'We might say that characters divide, but metaphors unite.' by asking what on earth the word 'character' is if it isn't metaphoric? The OED records the first instance of the word in the sense of a literary creation as being in *Tom Jones* (1749), so it has a very recent and genre-bound history.

There is a betraying phrase describing what happens to 'the Superfluous Man' after Dostoevsky. 'He becomes the Underground Man . . . or *in the cant term of our own day*, the Outsider.' It is tempting to say that only out of Oxford could come a phrase such as the italicized. But the donnish cliché is more than just a matter of tone. It is echoed again and again in the irritation with 20th-century literature, and indeed most 19th-century literature too (Balzac, Flaubert, Zola, George Eliot, James, Lawrence, Lukács, and Butor come in for a snort at some point). And this shows how utilitarian Bayley's attitude to literature is. We always feel that Tolstoy hasn't really changed him, but that he has taken what he needs. Of course, it should be added that the spectacle of an intelligent liberal taking what he needs is an interesting and illuminating one, and that it does offer genuine insights.

J.G.

Edwin S. Munger, *Bechuanaland: Pan-African Outpost or Bantu Homeland*. Institute of Race Relations, OUP, 9s. 6d.

Christopher R. Hill, *Bantustans: The Fragmentation of South Africa*. Institute of Race Relations, OUP, 9s. 6d.

The difference in formal status between independent Botswana (Bechuanaland Protectorate until October 1966) and the Transkei, the model 'Bantustan' with an almost powerless Legislative Assembly, is little more than a historical accident. Both these territories, like the other 'Native reserves' within South Africa and the other High Commission territories, are inserted in the same manner into the Southern African socio-economic structure: both show the same symptoms of sub-subsistence agriculture, massive labour migration to urban areas, financial dependence on the Republic. In Botswana, 87 per cent of exports are based on livestock, largely sent to the Republic, and 98 per cent of the inhabitants depend on cattle for subsistence or cash income. At any one time 20 per cent of the adult male population

(says Munger, though his figure is low in comparison with the estimates of others) are away working in South Africa, and, because of lack of development of water resources, only 5 per cent of the land is under cultivation, making the territory extremely susceptible to drought. A substantial part of Botswana's revenue is derived from her share of South Africa's customs receipts. In the South African 'reserves' the pro-Government Tomlinson Commission itself estimated that the land could carry no more than 30 per cent of the people who were on it; apart from the Government's rather half-hearted attempt to establish a small African bourgeoisie in the 'reserves' non-competitive with whites, the result is still massive labour migration to the mines or industrial areas.

Chief Sabata Dalindyebo the Transkei opposition leader, once described the 'freedom' offered by South Africa in the Transkei as a 'fowl run'. He was referring to the particular constitutional manifestations (minority of elected members, non-crucial portfolios only handed over, reserved power in hands of South African Government). But in the face of the overall socio-economic situation, almost any constitution, for the Bantustans or the High Commission Territories, would provide as little freedom. The sanctions which South Africa could apply are sufficient to deter leaders in the High Commission Territories from seeking aid from 'unwelcome' sources, from harbouring persons or organizations hostile to South Africa, from attempting to restructure their economies—just as the carrots and sticks used in the Bantustans have thrown up a leadership prepared to work within South Africa's terms of reference.

Both Hill and Munger are content to little more than enunciate these 'problems' for the leaders of South Africa's 'African areas'; they throw in the occasional cluck of sympathy for the unfortunate position in which the leaders are placed and Munger, at least, heaves a sigh of relief that Botswana will escape that 'extreme' ideology of African nationalism.

The future development of the African areas, both HCT's and Bantustans, demands a shift of power at the South African centre. But this obvious fact once stated, takes one no farther. It is difficult at this stage to evaluate what tactical flexibility is latent in either the High Commission Territories or the Bantustans: could resolute nationalist movements, capturing power in the High Commission Territories, bargain any harder with South Africa? Botswana straddles the only South Africa-Rhodesia rail link (though another railway is projected elsewhere); Lesotho holds the headwaters of the Orange River. The Opposition party in the Transkei, should it capture power, has opportunities for at least embarrassing the South African Government. Most have imagined that revolution in South Africa will begin in the densely populated sections of the rural areas—an analysis, based on Mao and Fan, which has been used, for example, by Govan Mbeki. There are strong arguments against this theory—the two most important of which are that rural areas are compartmentalized and isolable, and that they are peripheral to the South African power structure. But the rural/urban argument in South Africa is still an open question.

These two books add little to our understanding of the dynamics of South Africa, though Hill's is the more competent in description.

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In Britain today disparities in income and wealth are as great as they have ever been. The well-being enjoyed by some makes the survival of poverty seem even more shameful. There has, recently, been a great deal of research exposing the poverty that exists. Few of these descriptions transcend the limitations of local description, or make explicit the links between inequality and the exploitation that marks our society, and the systematic attacks now in train on the prerogatives of the trade union movement. The unions have never needed to be more militant, and they have never had to confront such a systematic attempt to confiscate their rights. 'New Left Review' is shortly to bring out, in association with Penguin, a survey of the situation of the Unions in Britain today. We present here a version of Robin Blackburn's article, which begins the book. He reviews not only the statistical evidence for inequality, but also employs many of the concepts—exploitation, work intensification—that Marx found necessary 100 years ago and which are still just as valid today. Juxtaposed with such evidence, the vigour of the present government's assault on the Labour movement, and the necessity for its confrontation and attack by all socialists stand out more starkly than ever.

In 1965 the Nkrumah régime was swept away. We reviewed in NLR 39 the data of the coups that occurred throughout Africa. A most urgent task for socialists has remained the specific examination of the actual progress and performance of the 'Ghanaian Revolution'. Last year two authors presented, in *Ghana: End of an Illusion* an analysis of the sort so badly needed. In this issue Roger Murray appraises the book and considers its omissions. His conclusions are far-reaching. As he remarks: 'What is needed now is a much finer discrimination of the variant forms of a 'neo-colonialism' which embraces much of the world The starting point for a lucid understanding of contemporary counter-revolutionary dynamics is that the historically necessary should not be confused with the historically possible.'

ANNOUNCEMENT

Recent increases in overseas postage rates have made it impossible for us to continue to sustain the whole cost of posting NLR to subscribers as we do at present. From January 1st, 1967 there will be a NEW OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTION RATE of 39/- or \$5.50 a year. The inland rate will remain unchanged at 27/-.

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Inequality and Exploitation

Britain remains a country where the concentration of wealth is still one of the highest in the world. This is a fact that has significance for all societies of the capitalist type. After all, Britain has had one of the strongest Labour movements of any advanced capitalist country. The fifth Labour Government now enjoys office, while the British trade unions, unlike their counterparts on the continent, are not divided on political or religious lines. The experience of two world wars provided particularly favourable contexts for reformist action as did the general advance to prosperity of the economy. Yet the relative positions of the major social classes have not changed in this century. Britain today is not a significantly more equal society than when the Labour Party was brought into existence by the unions over sixty years ago. In the intervening period the labour movement has succeeded in maintaining but not improving the relative

economic position of those it represents. In certain favourable conjunctures it has been able to win particular, notable advances, such as the Health Service, only to see them eroded in the subsequent period.

The British labour movement has always drawn back from a serious confrontation with the power of private capital. Whether during the General Strike of 1926, or the Labour Government of 1945-51, at the decisive moment caution prevailed. Thus the forces making for social inequality remained, and remain, unscathed. Private property, installed at the heart of the productive system, survived to generate the inequalities displayed below.

The Distribution of Wealth

Two recent investigations give us a picture of the distribution of private wealth in contemporary Britain. According to estimates published in *The Economist* the richest 7 per cent of the population owned 84 per cent of all private wealth, while the richest 2 per cent accounted for 55 per cent of the total.¹ Very similar conclusions were reached by J. R. S. Revell of Cambridge University who estimated that the top 5 per cent of the population owned 75 per cent of all personal property while the top 1 per cent own 42 per cent of all such property. The results of both studies are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1; *The Distribution of Personal Wealth in the U.K.*²

| % of the population | As a % of total personal wealth | | | % of personal pre-tax income from property, 1959 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|--------|------|--|
| | 1936-8 | (1954) | 1960 | |
| 1 | 56 | (43) | 42 | 60 |
| 5 | 79 | (68) | 75 | 92 |
| 10 | 88 | (79) | 85 | 99 |

Table 2; *The Distribution of Personal Wealth in U.K. 1959/60.*³

| Size of fortune (in £s) | % of taxpayers | % of total wealth | Average size of fortune (in £s) |
|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Below £3,000 | 87.9 | 3.7 | 107 |
| £3-10,000 | 5.1 | 12.0 | 6,000 |
| £10-25,000 | 4.9 | 29.0 | 15,200 |
| £25-50,000 | 1.2 | 16.6 | 36,250 |
| £50-100,000 | 0.6 | 15.1 | 68,250 |
| £100-200,000 | 0.2 | 10.6 | 136,400 |
| £200,000 and over | 0.1 | 13.0 | 334,100 |

The following points are worth noting:

1. The vast majority of the population owns very little wealth at all. As shown above, according to *The Economist* the 87.9 per cent of the population who own less than £3,000 have an average holding of only £107.
2. Both estimates are ultimately based on estates assessed for the collection of death duties by the Inland Revenue. They are liable to under-

¹ 'Still no Property-owning Democracy' in *The Economist*, January 15th, 1966.

² J. B. Mcade, *Efficiency, Equality and the Ownership of Property* (London, 1964), p. 27. The figures of 1954 (in brackets) are from H. F. Lydall and D. G. Tipping, 'The Distribution of Personal Wealth in Britain' in *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics* (February 1961).

³ *The Economist*, January 15th, 1966.

state the degree of concentration of property ownership as the wealthy are known to evade this tax systematically. Much property is either given to younger members of the family, exported abroad, or placed in family trusts which escape the Inland Revenue assessors and is not liable to duty.

3. The fact of tax avoidance, which as *The Economist* notes is 'inevitably more widespread in the top wealth brackets', makes comparison of the figures over time very difficult. It is all the more remarkable that the top 5 per cent owned roughly the same proportion of the total in 1962 as they did in 1936-38.

4. Revell's figures (Table 1) show that property income is even more highly concentrated than property ownership, so that the richest 10 per cent of the population actually receive 99 per cent of all property income. *The Economist* survey similarly notes that 'the rich do not only have more money; they also make it multiply faster'. The main explanation for this is that the rich can devote a larger proportion of their wealth to investment in equity shares, with the high yields and capital gains which these produce. *The Economist* estimates that only 5 per cent of fortunes under £10,000 consist of shares, compared with 56 per cent of fortunes over £250,000. 'As a result, the average capital appreciation of the assets held by the wealthiest group on this average composition has been 114 per cent between 1950 and 1964; while the assets of the £3,000-£10,000 group have appreciated by only 48 per cent'.⁴

Share-ownership is in fact much more concentrated than the ownership of other types of property. Only 4 per cent of the adult population hold any shares in commercial or industrial companies, according to a recent Stock Exchange survey.⁵ An earlier investigation found that the top 1 per cent of the adult population owned 81 per cent of privately owned company shares.⁶ *The Economist* comments on the composition of the large fortunes as follows:

'... there is undoubtedly a permanent built-in tendency to inequality here. It is not just that the wealthy are financially more sophisticated; they are also genuinely better placed to take risks and need to keep a smaller proportion of their money as a liquid reserve. The awkward fact is that any tendency towards a more even distribution of wealth in Britain is being counteracted all the time by these differences in its composition.'⁷

We are here dealing with the ownership not just of wealth, but of the country's productive system. Even when the economy only expands at a moderate pace, as it has done over recent years, the private ownership of the means of production powerfully generates inequality. This is the heart of a system which has systematically defeated egalitarian attempts which fail to encroach on property rights. The combined effect of all taxes on capital (capital gains tax, death duties, etc) remains very mild: according to *The Economist* they 'amount to a property levy well under 1 per cent a year'.

⁴ *The Economist*, loc. cit.

⁵ 'Shareholders: Why So Few?' in *The Economist*, July 2nd, 1966.

⁶ H. F. Lydall and D. G. Tipping, 'The Distribution of Personal Wealth in Britain in *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics* (February 1961).

⁷ *The Economist*, January 15th, 1966.

The existence of a large public sector, following the nationalization of certain industries, might be thought to modify the picture presented above. The value of public property, no less than 42 per cent of the total, does not offset the great concentration of private wealth. The national debt actually exceeds the value of all public property by some 14 per cent, £28 million as against £21 million in 1960. All public property is hopelessly mortgaged to the private sector—the estimates cited above have already taken account of this, as they included the ownership of government securities and other items of the national debt. Professor J. E. Meade has commented on this situation that, 'as far as the net ownership of real wealth is concerned we live, not in a semi-socialist state, but in an anti-socialist state'.⁸ Where nationalization involves compensation to the former owners—and compensation has always been generous in Britain—the distribution of property ownership is not much affected. Moreover, the publicly-owned industries have predominantly been those which were unlikely to be profitable—either declining industries (railways and coal-mining) or infant industries unlikely to be profitable for some time (atomic power). Marx's dictum still holds: 'The only part of the so-called national wealth that actually enters into the collective possession of modern peoples is their national debt.'

The Distribution of Income

Uncritical acceptance of information derived from the Inland Revenue encouraged the belief that during the war and immediate postwar period a permanent egalitarian shift had occurred in the distribution of the national income. Titmuss's work revealed the faulty statistical basis of this view and led to a renewed awareness of the powerful forces making for inequality in contemporary Britain. To give some idea of the main gaps in the Board's information, the following should help:

1. The tax-free character of many fringe benefits has given them increasing importance in recent years. The contribution to incomes made by company cars, subsidized housing, subsidized school fees, meals, etc, has recently been estimated by *The Economist*. The following table shows that the importance of fringe benefits rises with income, not only absolutely, but also proportionately:

Table 3; *Fringe Benefits as a percentage of Salary.*⁹

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| £1,000 per year | 11% |
| £1,600 " " | 15% |
| £3,500 " " | 19% |
| £4,200 " " | 21% |
| £7,000+ " | 31% |

These tax-free fringe benefits help to explain the statistical invisibility of really high income-earners.

2. Dividends and interest taxed at source are often not reported by taxpayers to the Inland Revenue. In 1958-59 the Board estimated th

⁸ J. E. Meade, *Efficiency, Equality and the Ownership of Property* (London, 1964), p. 69.

⁹ *The Economist*, August 27th, 1966.

these omissions amounted to £260 million.¹⁰ As we know that property income is highly concentrated this substantial tranche would undoubtedly increase the inequalities of distribution in Table 3.

3. We have already noted the effect of capital gains on the distribution of wealth: from the income perspective they are also important. In Meade's words: 'In the United Kingdom there is a special reason why the figures of personal incomes derived from income tax returns will seriously underestimate personal incomes from property. They exclude capital gains. But the increase in the value of company shares which is due to the accumulation of undistributed profits represents in effect a personal income for the share-holders which has been saved for them by the companies themselves'.¹¹

4. Titmuss has written: 'The British fiscal system is almost unique in the Western World in its generous treatment of wealth holders in allowing them to use family settlements, discretionary trusts, gifts family covenants, and other legal devices for redistributing and rearranging income and wealth'.¹² Thus, the income from accumulation trusts set up in favour of children under 21 simply adds to the capital value of the trust eventually received by them when they reach the necessary age.

5. Income which accrues to life insurance and superannuation funds is also not included as part of individual income though it clearly confers at a later date an important financial advantage to certain sections of the population. Meade estimates certain additions to such funds to have been £236 million in 1959. Though a relatively large number of salary earners benefit in some way from such arrangements, the upper income brackets benefit even more. For example, the top 1 per cent of incomes accounted for one seventh of the Inland Revenue relief offered as a 'special indulgence' to life assurance holders in 1959 to 1960.¹³

6. An estimate of the rentable value of owner-occupied houses must naturally be made if we wish to know the income, or income equivalent derived from property ownership. Meade puts this figure at £300 million for 1959-60. Again, the rich are not only more likely to own their own houses but they are more likely to own more expensive houses

This list by no means exhausts the lacunae to be found in the statistics of income distribution.* The net effect on distribution of the factors in

*Changes of composition in the tax population provide another area of problems making intertemporal comparisons very difficult: e.g. a husband and wife are usually counted as one unit for tax purposes, thus 'the phenomenal rise in the amount of marriage and in the number of early marriages is one of the major factors in producing statistical illusion of greater income equality'. (Titmuss, *Income Distribution and Social Change*, London, 1962).

¹⁰ R. M. Titmuss, *Income Distribution and Social Change*, (London, 1962), p. 115.

¹¹ J. E. Meade, *op. cit.*, p. 79. See also *Final Report*, Royal Commission on Income Tax, Cmd 9474, 1965, p. 380-1.

¹² R. M. Titmuss, 'Goals of Today's Welfare State', in *Towards Socialism*, (London 1965), p. 361.

¹³ R. M. Titmuss, *Income Distribution and Social Change* (London, 1962), p. 167.

question is impossible to quantify with any precision, though the overall inequalitarian impact they have on income distribution is manifest. Meade concludes as follows:

'It would seem that personal incomes from property . . . may be under-estimated by as much as £1,500 million (£200 million for certain deductions allowed by the Inland Revenue, £800 million for under-estimated profits net of depreciation, £200 million for the income of life assurance funds, £300 million for owner-occupied houses).'¹⁴

Only the most visible items have been included here. If the calculations are even roughly accurate then they raise the share of property income in total national income to the range 15 per cent to 25 per cent. According to Meade the consequence of this value for property income is to raise the share of the top 1 per cent of income to a total amount equivalent to that received by the bottom 36 per cent of incomes.

On one point Meade himself uses an Inland Revenue figure that should be subjected to closer scrutiny—the figure for profits net of 'depreciation'. The concept of depreciation used by the Inland Revenue refers to that portion of gross profits which are covered by Depreciation Allowances and hence are not taxed. These allowances have been greatly increased over the last decade as an encouragement to investment, and government statisticians make it clear that they bear no necessary relation to real depreciation costs (this is explained in an appendix to the *National Income and Expenditure* blue book for 1965, p. 38). Thus, while 'depreciation' was only £521 million in 1954 it had risen to £1,967 million by 1964. *As a consequence of this rise British companies were actually paying £135 million less in taxes in 1964 than they had been paying in 1954.* The latest figures show that whereas company taxation raised £881 million revenue in 1955 this had dropped to £580 million by 1965.¹⁵

Given the erosion of money values over this period and the considerable rise in overall tax revenue, this declining contribution in money terms has meant that the share of companies in total tax has fallen to less than half its value in the course of ten years. Deliberately generous depreciation allowances have offered innumerable ways of avoiding tax on profits. No doubt it is because the category 'depreciation' so often merely refers to untaxed profits that capital gains have been so important over the last ten years. The effect of reinterpreting Meade's estimates in this way would be to increase the share of property income by a large, but indeterminate, amount.

Factor Incomes

The approach adopted above was to attempt to discover income distribution by reworking Inland Revenue information. The results of such a scrutiny must remain to some extent inconclusive though with the strong probability that income inequality has been maintained at high level, or that, in Titmuss's words: 'Ancient inequalities have assumed new and more subtle forms.'¹⁶ However it will be useful, as

¹⁴ Meade, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

¹⁵ *National Income and Expenditure*, HMSO, 1966.

¹⁶ R. M. Titmuss, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

... to look at incomes from another perspective: that of the ratio of profits to wages and other employment incomes.

In 1938 the ratio of gross profits to all employment incomes was 1 to 4.5, in 1962 it was 1 to 4.8 and in 1965 1 to 4.2.¹⁷ The considerable stability of this ratio is maintained over quite long-term periods, with short-run fluctuations cancelling out. Profits tend to fluctuate more than employment incomes in the short run. Between 1870 and 1950 the share of wages in the national income varied between 36.6 per cent and 42.1 per cent;¹⁸ during the years 1960 to 1962 wages comprised 42 per cent of national income. Changes in the definition of what constitutes 'wages' and 'employment incomes' complicate this picture, as do changes in the composition of the working population. It seems that both employment incomes and property incomes have grown at the expense of incomes from self employment in this century, with the former, as one would expect, gaining more. The complicating factors to some extent offset one another, leaving the broad relation between the different categories as they were. This, at least, seems to have been the case over the last few decades. The author of an analysis of income distribution in 1959 compares his findings with those made by T. Barna for the year 1937 in the following terms: 'the degree of inequality of producers or pre-redistribution income seems to have been very similar in the two years'.¹⁹ Although year to year variations can be partially correlated with union strength the constancy of the share of labour in the national income in the long run shows within what narrow limits the unions operate in a capitalist society. Even in the short term it is favourable overall conditions in the economy and labour market which give unions the chance to raise slightly the share of wages.

Any capitalist economy is a complex ensemble of economic variables: change in one variable (for example, money wages) triggers off change in other factors, for example the value of money, which restore the *status quo ante*. This *Alice in Wonderland* logic of a capitalist system from the worker's point of view has again become apparent from a new study of the movement of wages and salaries between 1906 and 1960 published by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.² The author of this study writes that: 'As with Alice, it is sometime necessary to run faster and faster to stay in the same place . . . the Unions then act as agents for hurrying things along.'²¹ However Routh goes on to note that, 'in the race, transient advantages may be of considerable importance to the parties concerned, and may give groups of workers advantages that are obscured in long term comparisons'. Investigations into the economic role of unions tend to indicate that the more militant union or the union which finds itself in a more

¹⁷ *Annual Abstract of Statistics*, 1956 and 1963; *National Income and Expenditure*, 1966. It should be noted that employment incomes includes managerial salaries and directors' fees.

¹⁸ E. H. Phelps-Brown and E. P. Hart, *The Share of Wages in the National Income*, *Economic Journal*, vol. LXII, 1952.

¹⁹ J. L. Nicholson, 'Redistribution of Income in the United Kingdom' (London 1965), p. 61. The redistributive effects of taxation in these years will be considered later.

²⁰ Guy Routh, *Occupations and Pay in Great Britain, 1906-60*. (London 1965).

²¹ Routh, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

unfavourable economic conjuncture can raise its members' wage rates considerably in the short term.²² However the self-equilibrating nature of even an imperfect market economy seem to ensure that such 'transient advantages' simply maintain the share of labour in national income rather than significantly increasing it.

The Welfare State

The discussion so far has not explicitly confronted the redistributive effects of the taxation system and of social welfare when looked at as a whole. An *Economist* survey again provides a useful summary of the significance of the total tax burden in Britain:

'Contrary to undying popular belief Britain is not one of the most heavily taxed countries in the world. True taxes of all kinds devour about one third of the national output. But this is well below the figures of between 40 per cent and 45 per cent which hold good in France, Sweden and Germany. Even Americans suffer 30 per cent of their total incomes to be claimed back in taxes. . . . Partly these differences reflect accounting practice. But a more important factor is the view a country takes about the level of social services it provides. France and Germany give a lot; Britain, like Switzerland, is only middling (there goes another popular myth); and America takes a 'low' view. Both Britain and America, in fact, would appear even lower in the tax burden table if it were not for armaments expenditure.'²³

More important than the absolute size of the tax bill is the question of which groups pay it.

Two recent attempts have been made to assess the distribution of the tax burden between different income levels. These assessments take into account not only taxes on wealth and income but also those on consumption (these latter taxes can be imputed on the basis of Family Expenditure Surveys). These studies agree closely on one very important point: the failure of the British tax system to tax the rich significantly more heavily than the poor. A. J. Merrett, summarizing the investigations he conducted with D. A. G. Monk, writes as follows: 'The basic conclusion is therefore that the great bulk of all taxes are in fact paid by tax-payers with relatively modest levels of income.' He adds that 'the percentage of income paid in total taxes tends if anything to be somewhat *higher* at the lower ranges of income'.²⁴

Although the income tax is 'progressive' (i.e. taxes the rich more heavily than the poor) this is not the case of the other taxes which are so important in Britain, a number of which are actually regressive. Thus the total revenue raised from all the taxes of wealth and profits (surtax, death duties, profits and excess profits tax) amounted to £933.5 million in the fiscal year 1965-66, this was *less* than the revenue raised by the tax on tobacco alone (£1,014.9 million).

Whether the tax system is ultimately redistributive finally depends on the pattern of government expenditure. Fortunately the government publication *Economic Trends* publishes information which relates direct

²² cf. Albert Rees, *Wage Inflation*, National Industries Conference Board (USA, 1957).

²³ *The Economist*, June 26th, 1966.

²⁴ A. J. Merrett, *Sunday Times*, Business Section, September 25th, 1966. His conclusions are based on 'The Structure of us Taxation 1962/3' by A. J. Merrett and D. A. G. Monk, in *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics* (August 1966).

to this problem, the direct and indirect taxes paid by the different income groups are computed against the direct and indirect benefits which, on average, they receive. The evidence suggests that redistribution *within* social classes is more significant than redistribution *between* them. Single adults, and couples before they have children, tend to subsidize larger families and to finance state pensions for the old. Thus in the income range £676-816 per year a single adult would suffer a loss of income of 31 per cent after allowing for both taxes and benefits. A man in this income range with a wife and two children would experience a net loss of income of 5 per cent, while if he had four children his income would actually increase by 23 per cent.²⁵ The income range £816-£988 per year exhibited a very similar pattern. Comparing across income ranges one finds that a single adult in the income range £382 to £460 suffers a loss of income very much the same as the couple without children in the £2,122-£2,566 income range: the former suffers a net loss of 24 per cent, the latter of 29 per cent. Or again the couple with an income between £816-£988 and one child experience a net reduction of 17 per cent compared with a net reduction of 18 per cent for the couple with two children in the income range £2,122-£2,566.²⁶

There remains, of course, some element of 'vertical' redistribution between income groups; but this is to be found in most societies and is not a special consequence of 'the welfare state'. J. L. Nicholson's conclusion, after examining both the incidence of direct and indirect taxation and the provision of social services is that 'there appears to have been little increase in the amount of vertical redistribution between 1937 and 1959'.²⁷

Comparison over this period of time conceals the more egalitarian effects of total tax and benefits produced by the war and maintained by the Labour Government for a certain period of time after it. There seems to be some parallel between the effect of union activity and the effect of political representation of labour through the Labour Party. When circumstances are favourable both can obtain real advances for those they represent. But in the longer term the logic of a private enterprise system erodes these gains and re-establishes the former relative position. It seems that the power of the labour movement in capitalist society is never a static quantity. This power must expand until it encroaches on the property system, or it will be subject to erosion by the unchallenged momentum of capitalist accumulation. Further aspects of this question will be examined later. At this point is enough to note that the present Labour government has abandoned any policy which threatened to produce a significant redistributive effect.

The methods used by J. L. Nicholson and by *Economic Trends* to investigate redistribution are necessarily somewhat crude when it comes to imputing the value of benefits received by the different income groups. They probably underestimate the extent to which the middle and

²⁵ 'The Incidence of Tax and Social Service Benefits in 1963 and 1964', in *Economic Trends* (August 1966).

²⁶ All examples from *Economic Trends* (August 1966).

²⁷ J. L. Nicholson, *Redistribution in the United Kingdom* (London 1965) p. 61.

property-owning classes gain from the voluntary equal system of welfare provision. In a class society, it is difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that publicly provided welfare services will not be more intensively used by the richer sections of the population. Just as the recent rate rebate scheme was taken advantage of more readily in middle-class areas than it was in working-class ones, so in case of the social services, it is this factor that partly explains the different rates of infant mortality to be found in different social classes. A recent study revealed that death near or at birth is twice as common in the lower working class as it is in the upper middle class.²⁸ Perhaps the best researched example of the unequal use of a public service is provided by the workings of the educational system. As with other forms of social provision there is, in the educational field, also a private sector receiving indirect public subsidies through tax rebates. As if in imitation of the economy the education system is pervaded by a competitive and utilitarian ethos and the chances are always stacked in favour of the offspring of the richer sections of the population. A recent study entitled 'The Trend of Class Differentials in Educational Opportunity in England and Wales'²⁹ came to the following conclusions. Class differentials in educational opportunity 'result in the elimination of some 96 out of every 100 manual working-class children from formal full-time education before the age of 17'. The authors note that:

'... as this process of elimination goes on, so the relative prospects of survival as between children of different social origin become steadily less equal. At 11-13 a professional or managerial family's child had nine times as high a chance of entering a grammar or independent school as an unskilled worker's child. Some years later, at 17, he had nearly 50 times as high a chance of still being at school.'

And J. W. B. Douglas has shown that even among children whose performance in the eleven plus was similar, the child of the upper-middle class was three times as likely to go to a grammar school or public school as the lower manual-class child.³⁰

One further check remains to be carried out before exploring why it is that inequality has persisted undiminished in British society. If wealth has accumulated at one pole of society, then we would expect relative poverty to remain at the opposite pole if indeed the overall relation between social classes has not changed. And in fact that is exactly what we do find.

Evidence concerning poverty in Britain today is drawn together and analysed by Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend in a recent book, *The Poor and the Poorest*, London, 1965. After careful calculation their conclusion is:

'In 1960 approximately 18 per cent of the households and 14.2 per cent of the persons in the United Kingdom, representing nearly 7,500,000 persons, were living below a defined 'national assistance' level of living. About 35 per cent were living in households primarily dependent on pensions, 23 per cent in households primarily dependent on other state benefits, and 41 per cent in households primarily dependent on earnings.'³¹

²⁸ Neville R. Butler and Denis G. Bonham, *Perinatal Mortality* (London 1963).

²⁹ Alan Little and John Westergaard, *British Journal of Sociology* (December 1964), pp 301-16.

³⁰ J. W. B. Douglas, *The Home and the School* (London 1964), p. 122.

³¹ Able-Smith and Townsend, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

the plight of our people has always been an open scandal, yet a significant proportion, amounting to something like a million pensioners, still falls below the National Assistance level, while one half of all pensioners are solely or primarily dependent on the state, which means that they exist at or slightly above National Assistance levels.³²

There are two curious types of government-sponsored poverty which are less well known than that of the pensioners—those who are denied the full National Assistance either because of ‘the wage stop’ or because their rents are too high. Sickness and unemployment benefit must, according to the regulations, never exceed the wages a man would earn if he was employed. It is thought that without this ‘incentive’ to return to work the unemployed worker would be happy to live on the dole. Even during the autumn of 1965, when unemployment was very low, there were nearly 15,000 families who were denied the full National Assistance for this reason. And as large families are the ones most affected by the ‘wage stop’ provision, the number of children involved at this time was nearly 60,000. Usually National Assistance covers rent, but if rents of private accommodation are considered to be too high they will not be fully met. At the end of 1964 20,000 households (with approximately 60,000 children) were in this position. All these groups are of direct concern to the trade union movement: the old unemployed or sick worker needs union defence of his interests just as much as the worker on the job. But the most striking feature of the Townsend and Abel-Smith survey is the high proportion of *currently* employed workers who fall below the officially defined poverty threshold. On July 20th, 1965 it was announced in the House of Commons that between 150,000 and 250,000 families had incomes below the National Assistance minimum level. Anne Lapping commented in *New Society* on this figure that: ‘The average number of children in these families is probably something over three. This means that at least 450,000 to 600,000 children in Britain today live in homes that cannot afford what the NAB considers the minimum essential even when the breadwinner has work.’³³

The government’s Family Expenditure Survey for 1964 showed that 15.7 per cent of all male manual workers earned less than £12 per week and that no less than 42.7 per cent earned less than £15 per week. These figures give a more accurate picture of the low wage sector than the frequently-quoted statistics of the industrial wages released by the Ministry of Labour. Thus, according to the Family Expenditure Survey, 68 per cent of the manual workers earned less than £18 per week in a year when the Ministry of Labour estimated average earnings at £17 12s in April and £18 2s in October. The Survey’s own average for the year is £16 9s. *Labour Research* commented on this as follows: ‘The reason for this discrepancy is undoubtedly the relatively narrow categories for which the Ministry of Labour collects figures—the exclude for instance, agriculture, railways and distribution.’³⁴

³² Peter Townsend and Dorothy Wedderburn, *The Aged in the Welfare State*, Occasional Papers in Social Administration, no. 14, 1965.

³³ Anne Lapping, ‘The Unknown Depths of Poverty’ in *New Society*, December 9th 1965.

³⁴ ‘Family Incomes’, *Labour Research*, vol. LV, no. 8 (June 1966).

through circumstances which leads to a certain underestimation of the incidence of poverty is the way in which the cost of living index is composed. The commonly quoted index naturally includes all those items which a middle-income family purchases. The pattern of expenditure of the poorer sections of the population is known to be very different and hence the real price index of the goods they buy. Thus the purchase of consumer durable goods figures significantly in the budget of the middle-income family but not in that of the poorer family. The ownership of televisions is relatively widely diffused—only 20 per cent of households are without them. But, according to the Family Expenditure Survey of 1964, 47 per cent of households do not possess a washing-machine, 66 per cent are without a refrigerator and 63 per cent are without a car. The price of these goods has actually tended to fall over the last decade or so, compared with steep rises in the price of items which comprise the greater part of the poorer families' budget (rent, food, fuel and light, etc.). According to the Ministry of Labour, the cost of living index in August 1966 had risen to 117.3 from a base line in January 1962. The cost of durable consumer goods had risen by 10 per cent less than the general price rise while the cost of living had risen 12.2 per cent more, fuel and light by 3 per cent more.

The general effect of price changes over the past decade or more has clearly been to reinforce powerfully the inequalities which were noticed in the section above on the overall distribution of wealth and income.

So far this discussion of inequality in Britain has been primarily statistical. But how revealing it is of capitalist society that the deprivation and class division that it produces can be crudely indicated in this way. The true differences between men and women are incommensurable—it is in this sense that they should be equal. Any purely quantitative equality would violate the socialist principle, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need'. Capitalist society effects a reduction of quality to quantity; a price is put on everybody and human labour is bought just like any other commodity. The corrosion of human relations produced by a class society is more profound than anything that statistics can reveal:

"Considered only in terms of opportunity and power, class appears as a unilateral possession of privileges, a greater accumulation of benefits and powers in one sector of society than in another. But class is clearly more than this: it is a universal loss. There is one human need it violates in all members of society, oppresses and oppresses alike: the need of men for each other. It is its aspect as a pure human *division*, rather than an economic or political disparity, which is most often ignored and yet which most wholly describes class."²³

The Sociology of Exploitation

How is it that these dimensions of inequality have been so successfully maintained? For the most part the existing social sciences do not address themselves to this problem. Indeed the one concept which might help to explain the survival of inequality in ostensibly egalitarian

²³ Perry Anderson, 'Sweden: a study in Social Democracy' in *New Left Review* (March 1961).

preceding section provides an overwhelming *prima facie* case for rehabilitating this concept. Of course at a given moment those who are objectively the victims of exploitation may not recognize this fact. But I will argue that in Marx's phrase, the 'principal relations of exploitation' are 'independent of the will of individuals' and are 'on the whole determined by production and found already in existence by individuals'.³⁶ In this article it will only be possible to give a truncated and partial account of how the objective mechanism of exploitation operates in a capitalist society. But this is infinitely preferable to the common approach which implicitly refuses even to ask the question: why capitalist societies should generate wealth at one pole and poverty at another.

From one perspective the answer can be readily enough supplied. In societies of the capitalist type, where the ownership of the means of production is concentrated in private hands, inequalities of wealth are necessary to sustain the productiveness of the society itself. If the social process of investment and accumulation is left to private ownership then the fate of society as a whole is inextricably bound up with the fortunes of the rich. Once the productive resources of the community constitute also the private wealth of a section of the community, then inequality will be self-perpetuating. To preserve itself, capitalism must preserve inequality. Installed at the very centre of the productive apparatus, the institution of private property becomes very difficult to dislodge. An intimate connexion exists between the abstract concept of efficiency and productivity and the tangible fruits of capitalist profit. Reformist attacks on inequality tend to founder on the implacable demands of the economic system they take for granted. Moreover too gradual an assault on a capitalist economy demobilizes the only social forces which could carry it through. The morale of the working class is weakened by the labyrinthine manoeuvres of reformist policy.³⁷

Although these economic imperatives seem clear enough when we

*For example, a recent reassessment of Marx's economics attempts to 'retain the grain of truth in Marx's observation of the wage bargain as one of class bargaining or conflict without the loaded formulation of the "exploitation".' (Murray Wolfson: *Reappraisal of Marxian Economics*, New York, 1966, p. 117) A sociologist writes: 'the now nearly forgotten language of political economy, "exploitation" refers to relationship in which unearned income results from certain types of unequal exchange. . . Doubtless "exploitation" is by now so heavily charged with misleading ideological resonance that the term itself can scarcely be salvaged for purely scientific purposes and will, quite properly, be resisted by most American sociologists. Perhaps a less emotionally freighted—if infelicitous—term such as "reciprocity in balance" will suffice to direct attention once again to the crucial question of unequal exchanges.' (Alvin Gouldner, 'The Norm of Reciprocity' in *Social Psychology*, Edward B. Sampson (ed.), USA, 1964, pp. 83–84.

†W. G. Runciman has recently explored popular perception of inequality in *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (London 1966). He shows how many protect themselves against the knowledge of inequality by narrowing the range of those they will compare themselves with.

³⁶ Karl Marx, *German Ideology* (London 1965), pp. 591–92.

³⁷ cf. Tom Nairn's discussion of Labourism in *Towards Socialism* (London 1965.)

mechanism of exploitation operates at the micro-economic level. Where is the germ of exploitation to be found in a freely-arrived-at relation between employer and worker? In a sense the terms of the question provide its answer. The owners of capital as a class effectively monopolize employment opportunities so far as most of the population is concerned. The profits they receive are the price paid by their employees for the chance to earn a living. It is in the interest of the workers themselves that prices should be higher to enable the employing class to maintain and expand employment opportunities. In this manner it is possible to incorporate the worker into the logic of the company for which he works—the future of the company and the security of the worker can seem identical so long as the sovereignty of capital remains unquestioned.

As for the manager, he is continually reminded of his duty to make profits by the discipline of the market. Dismissal, takeover, or even bankruptcy ensures that the manager husbands the capital with which he is entrusted. Moreover it constrains him only to purchase labour whose fruits can be sold for a price which exceeds the cost of production.³⁸ Bankruptcy or low profitability of one sector of the economy in the context of the market, contributes to raising the overall economic surplus by penalizing the inefficient employment of resources. Thus the orientation of the system as a whole is displayed in each of its parts. The labour contract itself partakes of, and contributes towards, the exploitative character of social relations in a capitalist society. The sale of labour provides the germ of exploitation which requires (and receives) diffusion throughout the economic system. As a decisive moment in the social process it has been remarkably little studied outside the Marxist tradition. Only this tradition has seriously concerned itself with the question of how and why 'the value of labour power and the value which that labour creates in the labour process are two entirely different magnitudes'.³⁹

The Labour Contract and the Sovereignty of Capital

In capitalist society the productivity of labour derives from its collective and co-operative nature, yet it is remunerated on an individual basis. The employer is well placed to reap the difference between the individual price of labour and its social productiveness. What the employer buys is the worker's *ability* to work rather than that work itself. By selling his labour power the worker is effectively making it over to the employer for a stipulated period during which its organization and application will not be his own responsibility. There is something distinctly curious about this attempt to buy and sell labour just as if it were any other commodity.

The first thing to note is that the labour contract is not an exchange of equivalents: it is structurally asymmetrical. It is not just that the labourer

³⁸ I have tried to analyse the managerial features of modern capitalism in 'The New Capitalism', in *Towards Socialism* (London 1965).

³⁹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 215-26. (Moscow 1959).

constrained to buy labour. By the terms of the contract, the worker receives a definite—and usually public—rate for the job whereas the employer receives an impalpable potentiality whose ultimate development it is for him to determine. The worker's wage is thus negotiated and bargained for in a manner quite distinct from the manner in which dividends and capital gains arise in the production process. From the employer's side the labour contract is open ended. In principle the nature of the exact task the worker has undertaken to perform becomes the province of management. The workshop or office operates on a command structure in which the powers of decision rest with the owners' chosen representative, the manager.

Of course workers and the organizations which represent them have always tried to make explicit the terms of the contract and to delimit the powers of management. Agreements about the speed of work and the way it should be deployed are arrived at either formally or informally between the two contracting powers. Managements are often glad to reach such understandings, even where it might seem to limit their initiative. It is worth making concessions to secure the active co-operation of the work-force. Moreover the logic of the contract entails a tolerably precise specification of the different components in an exchange. In this way formal contracts are supplemented by informal contracts which come to define more and more what is expected of the workers for their pay. In exceptional cases a militant group of workers can significantly encroach on the prerogatives of management in this way. This produces a contradictory situation in that a *static* agreement has been imposed on a *dynamic* production process.*

In order to defend or improve profit levels, management periodically will be forced to introduce new methods or machinery. The established working agreements then become obsolescent and will have to be cast aside. Even a small change can disturb the intricate web of collusion between management and men. Senior management may tread clumsily on the informal tolerance established by junior management or a new manager may be unaware of practices allowed by the man he replaced. Whatever happens, the true power differentials will be revealed, all parties will be reminded of the fact that 'the manager has structural authority, the right to command and to expect and to receive obedience'.⁴⁰ This same writer, T. T. Patterson, in the managers' own journal, points out that he possesses sanctions to lend substance to his authority. Such sanctions include, according to Patterson: verbal reprimand, imposition of extra hours, docking of wages, loss of bonus, demotion, transfer to less pleasant work, closer supervision, 'black mark' on record, suspension and dismissal. A study of 'Disciplinary Practice' carried out under the auspices of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, gives us some clue as to the way in which sanctions are used. The 50 companies who co-operated by supplying

*A useful discussion of this question is to be found in Alvin Gouldner: *Wildcat Strikes* (London, 1955), pp. 161–65.

⁴⁰ T. T. Patterson, 'Towards a theory of retribution in industry' in *The Manager* (March 1961).

gressive' where industrial relations are concerned. Dismissal is said to be still the 'capital punishment of industry' and it is pointed out that dismissal:

entails not only the loss of a job, but also of many of the fringe benefits which are becoming increasingly common. Furthermore with the growing number of personnel departments, intercommunication between firms has grown and a dismissed man can be quickly blacklisted in the area: he might have to move his home in order to obtain employment.⁴¹

During the three years of the survey, 3,267 workers were dismissed by the 50 firms. Naturally bitterness can arise from the use of this sanction. We learn that, 'the cases most likely to cause dispute were those dismissed for alleged insubordination and incompetence.' There were 150 dismissals for 'insubordination' and 958 for 'incompetence and unsuitability'. One is not surprised to discover that according to the 1960 RUC Report, 20 per cent of all unofficial strikes in 1958/9 were caused by the dismissal of shop-stewards or members on disciplinary grounds. Victimization can, of course, be a very efficient weapon in the hands of a determined management. In the early 1960's the management at the Ford Dagenham plant successfully tamed the unions (at least for a time) by sacking over a dozen shop-stewards. However when a dispute does arise between management and the work-force, there are a number of factors conspiring to strengthen the former. The general climate of hostility towards strikes invariably pins the blame on the union rather than on management.

It is during the strike that the ultimate dependence of the worker on the next week's wage becomes dangerously clear. Even the giant Transport and General Workers' Union found itself in financial difficulties in 1958 during the busmen's strike despite the fact that the dispute only involved 50,000 of their one and a quarter million membership. The union found itself disbursing £225,000 a week in strike pay and only a loan enabled it to maintain the strike for seven weeks. A strike naturally causes a loss of revenue to a company but not one of the same relative proportions. Hence the conclusion that in industry:

The problems of power differentials in part expresses itself as a difference in the ability to defer gratifications . . . the party with the lesser ability to defer gratifications may have to capitulate, and satisfy the stronger party's expectations, even though he does not consider them legitimate.⁴²

The utter defeat of a strike is much more frequent than its utter victory, and 'in general the longer a strike lasts the greater is the probability that management will emerge the victor in that particular power struggle'.⁴³ *In extremis* the management can always dismiss all the workers and close down the plant to break union power. This has recently been done at the RNV factory in North London. For a big company such an act need not be all that costly: buildings can be sold, equipment transferred elsewhere or, more likely, the plant can be re-opened in a few months' time. The everyday power vested in management is such that open conflict is not usually needed to erode the collec-

⁴¹ M. D. Plumridge, 'Disciplinary practice' in *Personnel Management* (August 1966).

⁴² Alvin Gouldner, *Wildcat Strikes* (London, 1955), p. 141.

⁴³ Cf. for example G. Strasser, *Power in the Plant, Industrial Relations*, vol. 1 (London 1962).

live power of the employees. In fact, in the words of an American industrial sociologist: 'The rules governing workers' behaviour and discipline are a product of a set of managerial decisions.' Small change in such decisions, if adroitly used, can place the employees in a situation where accustomed defences no longer have any bearing.⁴⁴

From the worker's point of view there is little distinction between : new production method and an attempt to encroach upon his 'rights'. In a capitalist environment workers often fail to identify with the productive purpose of their work. They are more likely to identify themselves with 'their' job and all the agreements and understandings which hedge it round. Capitalist society itself encourages the workers to think of their work as a piece of property. On the other hand the technical restiveness of the productive system continually invades and destroys the worker's 'right' to his job. This is why workers will feel outraged when their work practices are called in question, though they may not be able to do anything about it.

The capitalist system forces men to sell their labour, to part with a vital element in their own autonomy, and then refuses to ratify an exact accounting of the transaction. To say that the worker *sells his labour* is to imply that it is his to sell. But the worker's labour is such a strange piece of property that it only exists *after* it has been sold. He cannot realistically just 'keep' his labour, for it has no definite existence. Forced to sell a general and indeterminate ability to work, the worker is by the nature of things at a disadvantage. In capitalist society man's creative potentialities are reduced to the status of a commodity. But since they lack the tangible attributes of a commodity even this debasing transaction cannot be honestly consummated.

Intensification of Labour

A further curious feature of the labour contract is the reversal of role which it produces. In reality the employee (worker, technician, etc.) : the active element in production while the ultimate owners (the shareholders) are entirely passive. But under the contract the employee having sold his labour power, is no longer responsible for it. In principle, the initiative now lies with the chosen representatives of the shareholders (management). One important aim of managerial initiative is to find the most profitable application of the labour power that the enterprise is purchasing. Traditionally this has meant all those managerial decisions which lead to what Marx called an intensification of labour: 'increased expenditure of labour in a given time, heightened tension of labour power, and closer filling up of the pores of the working day'.

This managerial function has become a specialized science employing time and motion study and work analysis. Crude attempts to limit the number and duration of tea breaks, rest periods, etc, remain but they are supplemented by new techniques for increasing the product of labour without increasing the capital employed per worker. The intro

⁴⁴ Robert Blanner, *Alienation and Freedom* (Chicago and London, 1964).

the worker and greater expenditure of nerve or muscle. It is naturally difficult to measure the success which meets the efforts of the work-study engineers. It does seem that short of the automated process plant the increasing use of modern production methods has led to work which becomes increasingly demanding, physically or mentally. The American sociologist Robert Blauner came to this conclusion after studying the different types of production still extant. Thus, where craft methods are still used (as they were until recently in the printing industry) the worker feels least oppressed by his work. Where the worker tends an individual machine (some sectors of the textile industry) he can still regulate his place of work to some extent. With the introduction of the production line (car assembly, for example) the pace of work becomes a coercive force implacably using up the workers' energies. The dangers of 'speed-up' are very real for such workers. Even where the introduction of new machinery means the replacement of physical effort by mental effort the result can mean greater demands on the worker. In a recent report by H.M. Inspector of Factories (1963) it was pointed out that the existing limitations on hours of work had become obsolete for this reason. 'Present limitations on hours of work were fixed when fatigue was largely a matter of physical exhaustion.' The Report points out that today fatigue often arises from the performance of 'perceptual tasks' and that such tasks produced fatigue more readily than sheer physical exertion. Often, of course, dial watching has to be combined with exactly timed manual operations. Work can also become more nerve-racking in the sense that it becomes more dangerous. New chemicals and other industrial materials are being used, adding new industrial diseases to the old. Perhaps the most systematic attempt to intensify labour is now the so-called 'productivity agreement'.

Overtime and Shift Work

As industry becomes more capital intensive, that is with more capital employment per worker, so it becomes even more necessary for management to cut to a minimum the period when the machinery is idle. A computer should be kept running 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The considerable recent increases in overtime and shift work are all part of this attempt to keep machinery (and men) in operation for as long as possible. Despite nominal reductions of the working day since the war, the actual average number of hours worked was the same in 1965 as it had been in 1938 (i.e. 47 hours a week). The overtime worker is of course paid more for this work, so that some jobs become prized for the chances they offer for overtime work.

The number of workers on shift work has doubled in the last ten years to the extent that one worker in five now works a shift system.⁴⁵ A recent American study shows that special health problems and difficulties in personal relationships tend to afflict the shift workers. After some time on shifts they 'felt fatigued, had trouble getting to sleep, appetite problems and bowel problems'.⁴⁶ The shift tends to interrupt

⁴⁵ 'Shift Work' in *New Society*, September 2nd, 1965.

⁴⁶ Paul E. Mott et al., *Shift Work* (New York 1965), p. 298.

the rhythm of men's lives, leading in a number of cases to ulcers and rheumatoid arthritis, frequent and severe colds and headaches. The authors also conclude: 'There was ample evidence that evening, night and rotating shift work create difficulties for all such shift workers in the execution of their family responsibilities.'⁴⁷

Whether deprivations of this sort can be compensated for by higher pay will be discussed later. For the moment let us consider exactly what these deprivations can include.

Accidents and Occupational Disease

The factory situation is one where management's main concern must be keeping costs down, while the workers are likely to have little control over, or interest in, the work process. Such a combination is unlikely to make for a safe working environment as the annual reports of HM Inspector of Factories demonstrates. In 1964 the total number of reported accidents rose by 31 per cent and in 1965 by 9.7 per cent, to reach a total of nearly 300,000 reported accidents in this year.⁴⁸ The Inspector of Factories notes that 'the accidents were mostly avoidable by known and tried methods of accident prevention'.⁴⁹ The loss of production caused by accidents is *five times that caused by strikes*, without provoking so far as one can see, anything like the same concern from political leaders or editorial writers. In the 1965 Report we read that 'instances are reported far too often of young persons being almost pushed into danger as a result of misconceived ideas of economy or to maintain production'.⁵⁰ In the 1964 Report a similar conclusion was reached: 'In too many firms compliance with safety regulations is perfunctory: safety is subordinated to the apparent interests of production though, in fact, the economic effects of accidents are very serious.'⁵¹

Under new legislation the Labour Government plans to stop the payment of industrial injury benefit for the day of the accident itself. This payment will be compensated for by some increase in the benefit received for severe disablement and what the Minister (Margaret Herbyson) described as: 'an upward revision of the scheduled assessment for certain leg amputations between mid-thigh and the knees'.

It is difficult to see how the incidence of industrial accidents can be really reduced until the role of the workers in the factory changes. If some meaning could be restored to work, and if production ceased to be organized for profit *alone*, then perhaps the avoidable could be more often avoided.

Similarly, large numbers of workers are exposed to hazards to their health. *The Annual Report of HM Inspector of Factories on Industrial*

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Annual Report of HM Inspector of Factories. HMSO, 1965, p. 7

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 1964.

1967/1968 records that 30,000 spans of certain incapacity owing to industrial causes terminated in the previous year.

Apart from toxic dusts and chemicals, noise may be one of the chief hazards to health in office and factory. No information on occupational deafness is yet published in Britain and no legislation controls noise levels. Fortunately a survey of the problem has recently been published by the World Health Organization. According to the survey:

The results of many thousands of audiometric examinations of factory workers from 16 to 65 years of age indicated that 56 per cent were suffering from varying degrees of hearing loss.²²

More intense forms of mechanization in factories, and the mechanization of offices 'has created a noise problem where none previously existed'. It is of course difficult to know to what extent workers' health and safety are being sacrificed to greater production (i.e. profits). The worker is dependent not just on the benevolence of management but also on the manager's knowledge about the problem and ability to rectify it if necessary.²³ There are, of course, some who imagine that it is not in the long run interest of management to allow bad working conditions, as such conditions breed low productivity. Evidently many managers are unaware of the fact. Take for example the following discussion on noise during night shifts which appeared in the major British management magazine:

... while high levels of factory noise may prove deleterious during the day, exactly the opposite may result when workers are sleepy. Over relatively short periods, no greater than half an hour, noise resembling a factory has proved to be progressively beneficial to the performance of sleepy operators, although it may have been conducive to poorer performances when these same people were alert.²⁴

Once men are thought of merely as 'operators' it becomes possible to think in terms of extracting as much labour from them as possible regardless of the human consequences. In capitalist society labour is cost of production, perhaps a rather special one, but subject none the less to the inflexible principle that it must be deployed as economically and profitably as any other factor of production.

The Vauxhall Episode

It is possible to be fully aware of the deprivations which modern factory work entails and yet still feel that the labour contract provides a stable and satisfactory method of compensating the worker for the unpleasantness of his job. After all the most demanding work (on the night shift on the assembly line) tends to be more highly paid. Is it not the case that workers who choose such jobs will be quite aware of the disadvantages that 'intensive' work involves yet be prepared to stomach this for higher rates of pay. This case has recently been systematical-

²² The WHO survey reports that the hazard of occupational deafness is covered Government legislation in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Moreover efforts have been made in Czechoslovakia to design all machinery in such a way that noise is minimized.

²³ Alan Bell, 'Noise, an Occupational Hazard and Public Nuisance', *who* (Gen 1966).

²⁴ D. W. J. Corcoran, 'Alertness during the Night Shift' in *The Manager* (March 1966).

presented by John H. Goldthorpe in *the British Journal of Sociology*.⁵⁴ After a survey of the attitudes of car assembly workers at Vauxhall's Luton factory he concluded that 'given a prior orientation to their work of a largely instrumental nature, car assemblers may well see their relationships with their firm in a generally positive way'. Goldthorpe goes on to observe that the 'dominant mode of involvement of the lower participants in all economic organizations tends to be of a primarily *calculative* nature rather than a moral nature'.⁵⁵ Goldthorpe's findings were that such an involvement did indeed characterize the Luton car workers at the time he studied them and no less than 77 per cent of them, as a consequence, had a 'co-operative attitude to management'. Moreover Goldthorpe saw no reason why the situation should change; the Luton car assemblers would continue to accept 'unsatisfying work tasks' as part of a relationship with their firm which is purely instrumental.

Rarely can a sociological study such as this have been so cruelly put to the test. Scarcely one month after the publication of Goldthorpe's findings, on October 17th and 18th, 1966, the Luton car workers broke into open rebellion. The workers in whom Goldthorpe had been able to detect 'little tendency to interpret employer-worker relations in fundamentally "oppositional terms"' were responsible for an outbreak reported on p. 1 of *The Times*:

Near riot conditions developed today at the Luton factory of Vauxhall motors. . . . Two thousand workers streamed out of the factory gates and tried to storm the main offices. Dozens of police were brought in and an inspector threatened mass arrests when the crowd halted traffic for half an hour. . . . The scenes outside the main offices today, with men singing 'The Red Flag' and calling 'String him up' whenever a director's name was mentioned, made yesterday's demonstration outside the executive offices seem mild. . . . Across the road hundreds of men linked arms and prevented a heavy Bedford truck from entering the factory. . . . When one American executive appeared at the door of the main offices some of the men mistook him for Mr Kelly (Director of Manufacturing) and tried to break through a cordon of security guards to reach him.

There is reason to believe that Goldthorpe's study is one of the most thorough and scrupulous ever to be conducted in a British factory. How is it possible then that he could have predicted that 'in spite of the deprivation which their jobs on the line may entail, these men will be disposed to maintain their relationship with their firm, and to define this more as one of reciprocity and interdependence rather than, say, one of coercion and exploitation'? How could he have arrived at the conclusion that conditions in the plant 'are no longer likely to give rise to discontent and resentment of a generalized kind'? The answer seems to lie in three factors which Goldthorpe failed to consider:

1. There is one 'deprivation' which is both essential to a capitalist enterprise and which can never be compensated for—profit. According to the *Daily Mail* report, the following situation lay behind the outbreak:

Figures provided for the Unions by the Labour Research Department shows that Vauxhall makes £900 profit each year for each man it employs. According to a pains

⁵⁴ John H. Goldthorpe, 'Attitudes and Behaviour of Car Assembly Workers' in *British Journal of Sociology* (September 1966).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

shop steward and company secretary were also angry at a £1000 fine a year) and BMC (£300 a man a year). The men are also angered by . . . the fact that of last year's £13 million profit, £7½ million was sent back to General Motors.⁵⁶

2. Individual factories and companies should not be seen as isolated, static milieux. Vauxhall's at Luton was under pressure to maintain profit margins and to weather the government's freeze. The plant had been put on a four day week, reducing wages by over 20 per cent. The workers naturally felt that such a profitable company could afford to maintain its workers' wage packets instead of expecting its workers to make the sacrifice. Any company is vulnerable to such outside influences as government policy, increased competition, necessity to maintain profits and so forth. The changes that occur in such situations are bound to throw into relief the conflicting interests of workers and employers.

3. Even though workers may be prepared to repress their desire for pleasant and creative work this does not mean that such desires have gone for ever.

Goldthorpe clearly overestimated the stability of both the companies' operations and the workers' consciousness in an inescapably unstable capitalist environment. Perhaps we would do well to remind ourselves of Marx's stricture that:

It is not a question of knowing what this or that proletariat, or even the proletariat as a whole, *considers* as its aims at any particular moment. It is a question of knowing *what* the proletariat *is*, and what it must historically accomplish in accordance with its *nature*. Its aims and its historical activity are ordained for it, in a tangible and irrevocable way by its own situation as well as by the whole organization of present-day society.⁵⁷

Conditions like those at Luton could only be regarded tolerable by those with a very shrivelled conception of what man can be. Worker may temporarily accept a purely 'instrumental' and 'calculative' attitude to their work. But their calculations may well lead to a questioning of the right of others to profit from their labour. I have dwelt on the Vauxhall episode because it summarizes many of the themes of this article. At Luton the precarious coexistence of prosperity and exploitation, oppressive work and an increasingly sophisticated work force set the stage for an explosion of consciousness. Such dramatic events tend to be local in character. But a certain restiveness has been evident in the British trade union movement over the last few years. The increasingly influential role of shop stewards and the large number of unofficial strikes both point to this.

I hope I have shown that such industrial conflict is structurally rooted in factory conditions and property relations. The wider implications of this conflict will be explored in the NLR Penguin on the Unions. In this book, *The Incompatibles*, Perry Anderson, Ken Coates, Bob Rothorn, Clive Jenkins and others extend the discussion of inequality, exploitation and trade union militancy which I hope my piece has broached.

⁵⁶ *Daily Mail*, October 18th, 1966.

⁵⁷ Karl Marx, *The Holy Family*.

Second Thoughts on Ghana

The interest of 'Ghana: End of an Illusion' far transcends its immediate subject. In a reality it exposes two 'illusions': on the one hand, the absence of lucidity and consistency in the anti-imperialist and 'socialist' strategy applied by the Ghanaian political leadership under Nkrumah; on the other, the willing self-deception and anaesthetization of the critical function among international socialists in general and the expatriate cohorts of the régime in particular.

Thus, the explicit aim of the authors is to provide a critical re-interpretation from a socialist standpoint of the whole CPP Nkrumah political era; a reassessment clearly rendered necessary by the ignominious demise of the régime before conspiracy of hockey-playing, sports-car driving and hymn-singing officers and policemen.² In so doing, Fitch and Oppenheimer put forward an historical and cultural analysis of the postwar period which departs radically from the bitual picture of Ghanaian political development, entertained on right and alike.

But there is a second or contrapuntal theme, which gives the book a wider relevance and perspective. For in critically re-evaluating the whole 'Ghanaian revolution', the authors also call into question a certain style of 'revolutionary solidarity' evoked by the Ghanaian, and comparable, experiences of national liberation struggle and proto-socialist postcolonial evolution. It is perhaps worthwhile expanding this 'obverse' theme a little before going on to discuss the book on its proper ground.

It may now be admitted that the image of Ghana (or Indonesia, or Algeria?) conventionally sustained and expounded by wide segments of the left was markedly discrepant from reality. Was this merely a matter of 'mistaken' analysis, explicable perhaps in terms of distance, paucity of information, and the like? I do not think we can be content with this, plausible as it may seem. The 'mistaken' analysis is connected to a larger political and organizational problem.

For it is simply not the case that the 'damaging' facts only came to light with the dredging operations conducted by the National Liberation Council in its pursuit of legitimization: the truth is that these facts were, at least in general outline, *profans but unspoken knowledge* on the left. The corruption, the grotesquerie, the complicities, the cult of the leader, the absence of genuine party life, the systematic elimination of all autonomous or critical groups, left as well as right, the sedimenting of new and gross class and power dispositions centring upon the state—none of this was news to anyone who lived and worked *in situ*, or who took the trouble to study the situation at all closely. What was involved was not absence of local evidence; it was a misinterpreted application of revolutionary responsibility and commitment.

Underlying this attitude, several superposed layers of socialist experience and confusion can be discerned. At bottom is the acute tension and distortion of 'socialist internationalism' brought about in the historic process of Stalinism, cold war, and volatilization of socialist experience. The intense pressures of this whole period produced crippling and parodic deformations in revolutionary consciousness, schematization: embattled and defensive reflexes, etc, which have been carried over and transposed on to the postwar anti-colonial liberation movement.

'Independence'

In the Third World arena, however, the specific actualization of the general crisis of international socialist consciousness has been shaped by further complicating factors. In the first place, the anti-colonial and nationalist processes dramatized the absence of any effective strategic integration of the diverse moments of struggle. In some cases, anti-colonial movements were conducted *against* the metropolitan lefts; others, without any real and useful support from them. In almost all cases, metropolitan socialists failed to go beyond a simple and mechan-

¹ Bob Fitch & Mary Oppenheimer, *Ghana: End of An Illusion*, Monthly Review Press 1966.

² This is no exaggeration. See the profoundly depressing biographical data supplied in the NLC publicity document *The Rebirth of Ghana*.

al demand for 'independence' and to make the *qualitative* and *strategic* analysis of the terms and prospects of the 'independence' in question which would assist socialists in the dependent territories to confront their true problems.

Yet this was especially necessary since the nationalist movements in Asian and African colonies were inevitably *composite formations* embracing in an externally imposed unity elements which were extremely heterogeneous, both socially and ideologically.

Associated with this failure to devise a common strategic and organizational framework for a positive historical insertion into the decolonization process, there has been a definite psychological disorientation among many sections of the European left *vis-à-vis* the colonized world. This is not the place for a morphology of the aberrations to which this has given rise: a veritable witches brew of neo-paternalism, left-wing Cartierism, naive 'charity', guilt-complexes of all sorts, international narodnikism, cults of violence, and futile apologetics.

The general default of meaningful and critical solidarity has thus manifested itself in an impotent oscillation between intemperate enthusiasms and equally intemperate abandonment—usually triggered by some setback or by the unpleasant discovery that the possibility of significantly inflecting the national revolution towards socialism was, after all, 'illusory'. This dismal litany of justificationism and liquidationism has been repeated again and again in the postwar world.

To break out of this sterile routine, we have to recognize that the present impasse occurs at three interrelated but distinct levels, which are not equally susceptible to 'solutions': organization; strategy; and analysis. The *starting point*—but only the starting point—for any general recovery seems to be located in the field of analysis.

Confining ourselves to Africa, we find that many strategic and political errors have in fact both resulted from or been reinforced by flaccidity and lack of principle at the level of *analysis of the situation*. Scarcity of profound study of contemporary imperialism, acquiescence in the self-descriptions and rhetoric advanced by post-colonial African political leaderships, the inability to disentangle the contradictory impulses and forces *within* a given national situation, the application of naïve and undialectical dichotomies at the continental level ('revolutionary' versus 'neo-colonial' Africa), the deflection and absorption of energies in irrelevant disputations with liberals about the 'democratic' character of African single-party systems, etc—how could any coherent, realistic and principled socialist strategy or action emerge out of all this?

Abandonment of principled analysis cannot be justified as the necessary price to be paid for influence upon events: absolutely unacceptable in principle, these pretensions to an occult steering of history in the Third World have also been shattered on the rocks of hard experience. The responsibilities of metropolitan socialists at the present time are stark and simple: confrontation of imperialism in its homelands; and unremitting analysis of the real situation and prospects of socialism in the

pre-industrial dependencies to which a formal sovereignty has now been conceded. These are the targets on which attention should be concentrated.

There are inexcusably few accounts of decolonization and of post-colonial economy and society which constitute creative applications of the dialectical mode (Merlier on the Congo and Furtado's recent work on Brazil are examples). The situation is, in fact, so bad that a massive work of recovery and conversion is needed to recapture the ground from American social science 'area studies' technocratic interventionism, and populist mish-mash. The Fitch and Oppenheimer book is a quite exemplary effort in this direction. It shows what can be done, merely by re-working available data, towards recovering the terrain for a socialist critique and re-inventing the terms of discussion.

Fitch and Oppenheimer's Method

Ghana: End of An Illusion is a short book, an essay almost, but it manages to deploy its material in a strikingly original way. This is due mainly to the perspective and method of analysis. The approach is oriented by two fundamental methodological principles: examination of the whole postwar decolonization process as a historical totality, thus subordinating and integrating the moment of independence within a wider ensemble; and application of the progressive-regressive method to key selected structures within the totality (Cocoa, Opposition-Labour, Development Strategy and relations with External Capitalism etc). The authors' central thesis, in its most general expression, is that 'the failure of the socialist experiment in Ghana did not lie in the peculiarity of African circumstances and still less in the psychology of single man. It failed because the attempt to break with Ghana's colonial past was not made soon enough, and because when it was made, it was not complete enough'. The argument has to be followed through its two phases: explicit critique; and implied alternatives.

The Nkrumah régime could not achieve socialism in Ghana because it had failed to evolve the necessary instruments of socialist transformation. From its inception, the CPP under Nkrumah's leadership was a composite of contradictions which expressed themselves at the level of its social composition, consciousness and historical practice. Far from resolving these contradictions the leadership embodied and sustained them, pursuing an oscillating and crassly 'tactical' line in the 1950's which demobilized potential revolutionary forces and facilitated the evolution of a rather complex postcolonial nexus linking State economic institutions with overseas capital. For, even when the régime ostensibly opted for a committed socialist path of development (in 1961-62), it was incapable of transcending sedimented institutions and practices. Certainly decisive changes occurred but what was emerging in the 1960's was not socialism but a specific and 'higher' form of neo-colonialism, masked behind a screen of socialist rhetoric and even undermined as a vital system by the accumulation of errors from which it proceeded

This interpretation is concretized at several levels. For our purposes, three dimensions of the exposition are important: the analysis of classes; of the state; and the dynamic periodization.

Class forces

Fitch and Oppenheimer see Ghanaian political process in terms of actual and potential class forces. In particular, the heterogeneous social composition of the independence movement is usefully broken down by outlining the principal and secondary contradictions among various segments of Ghanaian society; and between these and the expatriate owning class which mediated the colony's access to the international economy. The remarkable development of the cocoa economy and attendant commercial/brokering activities in the colonial Gold Coast produced major economic contradictions polarized around commodity prices (notably cocoa), access to trading capital, and access to markets ('concessions'). The political ground for a *unified* campaign against expatriate control of these resources in the 1940's—the junction of organization and consciousness—is familiar enough from existing historical accounts. But Fitch and Oppenheimer also stress the *internal* oppositions within this socio-economic constellation. Two such antagonisms are, to their minds, privileged because irreconcilable: that between small traders (with marginal capital) and chiefly-mercantile 'monopolist' concessionaires; and that between rural capitalists (again often chiefs) in the cocoa sector and the floating mass of rural proletariat, sharecroppers, and indebted tenants who were their dependants.

The CPP leadership and cadres came preponderantly from none of these classes, however. Rather they were drawn mainly from the *petty bourgeois salariat* (clerks, primary schoolteachers, PWD storekeepers, messengers, etc)—a mixed stratum which concentrated many of the political and cultural tensions of colonial society. It is precisely the socially ambiguous and unstable character of this stratum which helps us to understand its *relative autonomy and volatility* in the political arena. The CPP 'political' class did not express or reflect a determinate economic class.

CPP and 'Opposition'

This point is interestingly brought out in the analysis of the 1954-58 struggle between CPP and 'Opposition' forces. The authors bring an original insight to the discussion of this period by their presentation of the alliance of trading and professional classes with chiefly power and institutions (NLM) as a tactical move by a *frustrated national bourgeoisie*. Instead of a purely reactionary or 'counter-revolutionary' coalition aspiring simply to put the clock back, it becomes possible to perceive in the complaints and demands of this business class (brokers, timber merchants, building contractors, small manufacturers, transporters) the germs of a bourgeois-revolutionary solution to Ghana's continuing subordination to imperialism. For the CPP, in this period of 'dual rule' and collaboration with a colonial administration which reserved decisive areas of power, despite its ostensibly 'militant' and popular origins, was pursuing policies that could by no stretch of the imagination be

described as proto-socialist, nor even as an uncompromising defence of national interests. Cocoa surpluses were funded in the UK, sterling parity upheld, foreign banks and commercial firms maintained their stranglehold over distribution and credit facilities, and a totally permissive and liberal development strategy was applied. Neither state nor private capital accumulation directed to the creation of a manufacturing, industrial economy was under way.

The paradoxes of this situation were striking: the Colonial Administration, while hedging its bets, visibly favoured a continuation of CPP rule; NLM spokesmen demanded to have Queen Elizabeth's head stamped on the national currency and complained that Britain was selling them down the river to protect her financial interests; while the aborted Ghanaian national bourgeoisie 'found themselves in the unaccustomed position of defending the national interest against Anglo-American business. They were antagonized especially by the way the CPP served as broker for these foreign interests. They demanded that the government bring the British banks in Ghana under the control of the central banking system; they opposed Nkrumah's policy of allowing United States control over the Volta power complex; they fought for increased outlays for industrial development projects; they ridiculed the 'colonialist mentality' which produced annual budget surpluses³ despite increased national revenues. In making these nationalist charges and demands, the commercial-professional strata exposed the developing neo-colonialist tendencies within the CPP régime early in its history'.

The political action of the CPP in this period seems perfectly to echo Lukács' diagnosis. 'Le caractère incertain ou stérile pour l'évolution qu'a l'attitude des autres classes (petits bourgeois, paysan) repose sur le fait que leur existence n'est pas fondée exclusivement sur leur situation dans le processus de production capitaliste, mais est liée indissolublement à des vestiges de la société divisée en états. Elles ne cherchent donc à promouvoir l'évolution capitaliste ou à la faire se dépasser elle-même, mais en général à la faire rétrograder ou, au moins, l'empêcher d'arriver à son plein épanouissement. Leur intérêt de classe ne s'oriente pas qu'en fonction de *symptômes de l'évolution*, et non de l'évolution elle-même, en fonction de manifestations partielles de la société et non de la structure d'ensemble de la société.'⁴

The partial and 'transitional' character of this political class expresses itself in its absence of a determinate class standpoint grounded upon its site in the process of production. The problem we are then faced with is how to comprehend the social meaning of the CPP régime and, more specifically, how to differentiate it from postcolonial political classes in other African countries whose social origins, after a

³ Sears and Ross suggested in 1951 in a report commissioned by the colonial government and published during the period of 'self-determination' that budget surpluses were essential to counter inflationary tendencies consequent upon the physical limitation on the flow imports. This critical constraint was raised by the opening Tema harbour in the late fifties.

⁴ From the essay on 'Class Consciousness' in the French edition of *Histoire et Conscience de Classe*, Ed. de Minuit, 1960.

closely parallel that of the CPP? Do we, in fact, have to abandon class analysis as such?

In general terms, the answer is no. What we have to recognize, however, is that the ground and perspective of class analysis has to shift away from a simple itemization of the various internal class quantities, qualities and attributes towards a totalization of the decolonization process, embracing the whole range of determinations *exterior* to the class 'situation' or 'interest' (if this could adequately be defined) of the dominant group and its local rivals. This means, above all, seizing the process as an *uncertain historical movement* whose social direction and meaning will be defined and re-defined through *practices*. Once we grasp that the ruling 'petty bourgeois' stratum will inevitably transform and be transformed through the dialectical movement of history itself, that is through its accumulated praxis, we can see how vain and un-Marxist are all attempts to delineate and operationally 'fix' the class character of such a régime in a synchronic constellation. Obvious enough, yet much of the confusion concerning Algeria, Ghana, Indonesia, etc, has arisen from this elementary error, and the resultant 'time-lag' in perceiving and coming to terms with recalcitrant realities.

State power

Concretely, this re-focusing of class analysis within a wider totality than that of the emergent 'national society' will enable us to grasp *integrally* the neo-colonial determinations involved in the decolonization process and developmental in sub-Saharan Africa; and most importantly to comprehend the contradictions inherent in the accession to *state power* of unformed classes. The essence of the matter is that the post-colonial state (the 'political kingdom') has simultaneously to be perceived as the actual instrument of mediation and negotiation with external capitalism, and as the possible instrument of a continuing anti-imperialist and socialist revolution. In this setting, the 'relative autonomy' of the ruling 'petty bourgeois' (we can see how unilluminating the category is at this point) stratum becomes a critical issue, whose import has to be examined in its *modus operandi* of state power.

Socially, then, the picture we have is of a petty bourgeois group projected into the power vacuum caused by the lack of objective maturation of a national capitalist class and the subjective errors of aspirant bourgeois politicians. But the 'seizure of power' was neither immediate nor total. By 1957, the CPP leading group was already marked by six years of association in power with the colonial administration. It had defeated the Opposition principally by utilizing the attributes and advantages of its seat in government. Fighting on this terrain, it acceded to independence with a marked loss of popular momentum and support.

The strategic significance of this 'collaborationist' phase is discussed at length by Fitch and Oppenheimer, who quite correctly note that through it the CPP leadership developed autonomous group interests which 'were neither those of the colonialists nor yet those of the colonized'. They see the price of this collaboration in the CPP's reluc-

tance or inability in the 1950's to break decisively with sterling, and the control over exchange and credit exercised by the foreign banks, and the domination of the commercial houses over import, export and trading capital. This 'tactic' nullified developmental aspirations. The authors particularly attack the funding of Cocoa Marketing Board surpluses (both dollar and sterling) in London on this ground; 'Nkrumah and the CPP did not choose to use their powers as members of the CMB to strike out in directions that would have led to a confrontation with British power. The CMB under CPP control continued to levy what were in effect huge export taxes, send cocoa profits to Great Britain, and thus help Britain maintain the pound while renouncing, or at best postponing, attempts to start Ghana in the direction of economic independence and development.'

However, this perception of the constraints of state power in the period of dual rule needs to be filled out and developed with some examination of the situation of the formally sovereign post-1957 State. There is no structural or political examination of state institutions *as such*. Thus we fail to obtain either an analysis of the State as *formal organization* or an appraisal of the politico-administrative role and weight of the *civil service* within the state apparatus.

The main direction in which the CPP exercised its state power through the 1950's was merely towards bureaucratic consolidation. This assumed two related forms: the perfection of institutions and mechanisms of patronage; and coercive elimination or incorporation of oppositional and critical formations. The first is exemplified in the operations of the Cocoa Purchasing Company (a purchase/loan institution founded in 1952), which effectively created a huge patronage constituency of employees, 'receivers', and beneficiaries among *soi-disant* CPP farmers; the second, in the mass of repressive legislation mounted in the year 1958—Preventive Detention Bill, the confiscation of assets of pro-NLM State and local Councils, the arrest of opposition Assemblymen, and the new Industrial Relations legislation. The 'social autonomy' of the régime is well illustrated by isolating the targets/beneficiaries of CPP action in the 1950's. The main impact of the CPC—the CPP's 'atom-bomb'—was to put the government directly into competition with local brokers and creditors in the rural economy, while assisting substantially those poor farmers, etc, who joined the CPP-sponsored Unit Ghana Farmers Council. All cocoa growers were directly affected by the 1954 drop in CMB prices to the producer. The Industrial Relations Act merely followed upon the purge of militant unionists in the early 1950's and Tettegah's steady extension of CPP influence through the organized ruc to complete the domestication of the organized working class. The process of statification reached gross proportions when in May 1961 all separate membership cards for the various satellite organizations were replaced by a CPP card.

It might still be argued, however, that all this was merely a tactical necessary phase of centralization of power and gulling the imperial: until the moment was ripe for a socialist breakthrough: as Brecht marked, 'in order to bring that great enterprise to a successful conclusion, one still has to eat supper'. This presentation, popular among

spokesmen in the 1960's, has a real plausibility; for the fact is that a sharp left turn *did* occur around 1961. This raises the whole question of the dynamic periodization of the CPP régime; and more specifically, the problem of the 'transition' between what the authors call 'two Ghanas'.

Two phases

Unfortunately, two general weaknesses mar the handling of this dimension. To begin with, there is a *serious disproportion* in the amount of attention given to the two phases. Discussion of the 'socialist' stage of the Nkrumah régime is somewhat abbreviated and perfunctory, presumably reflecting the origins of the book in a historical-structural analysis of the *pre-independence decade*. This is especially regrettable insofar as it is the distinctive and novel formation of the 1960's which was seen as 'redeeming' the previous phase and distinguishing Ghana from almost all other postcolonial African countries. Our greatest present difficulty in the political analysis of the CPP régime does not reside so much in the dynamic interrelation of the two phases as in the fuller articulation of the 'socialist' moment.

Secondly, it must be said that the *specific* conceptualization and explanation of the 1961 transition fail to satisfy. Very roughly, Fitch and Oppenheimer present this pivotal turning point—which found symbolic expression in the two subsequent major policy documents, the CPP 'Programme for Work and Happiness' (formally adopted July 1962) and the new Seven Year Development Plan (which came into effect 1963–64)—as the belated recognition of the inadequacy of the liberal development strategy initiated by Arthur Lewis and embodied in the first two Development Plans. The outcome of this liberal approach in which developmental possibilities rested almost entirely on steadily rising export earnings and in which confrontation with foreign banks and merchant capital was studiously avoided, was clearly demonstrated once a ceiling on cocoa earnings was reached in 1959: running down of external reserves, deteriorating balance of payments, and net capital outflow.

The authors are right to situate the left turn against these medium term trends in the economy. But this is not in itself an explanatory mechanism: we still have to find a specific mediation between these general, 'abstract' trends and the exact *form* and *density* of the 'socialist' option of 1961. This mediation has to be sought at the level of *consciousness*, in the changing operational perception and constitution of the situation by the CPP leadership.

At this point, however, Fitch and Oppenheimer lapse into a pseudo-Marxist determinism which is both theoretically unacceptable and empirically unfounded. The explanation they offer is based on the assumption that the defining characteristic of the new socialist strategy was a radical shift towards the build-up of a manufacturing sector. The argument then proceeds as follows:

In any country, the political elite can derive its income only from tapping the economic surplus. But in an oppressed country like Ghana,

there is no inherent tendency for self-sustaining economic growth. Now, then, is the elite to derive its sustenance without starving its subjects? In the food-farming sector, a subsistence economy prevails; cash crops like cocoa have been subject to deteriorating terms of trade; mining is dominated by foreign firms with varying profit margins. Taxing the foreign-owned intermediary sectors—the banks and import-export firms—is as politically hazardous as trying to tax the mines. This leaves only one sector—manufacturing. In order to increase, or even maintain, its standard of living and its political machine, the political elite *must* increase manufacturing.’

This paradoxically ‘materialist’ explanation presents the ‘political elite’ as, by this time at least, an unmoored despotism impelled by its self-interest towards a ‘socialist’ developmental programme. Dialectical and class analysis has yielded to sub-Lasswellian cynicism and ‘realism’. The logic is dubious: it is perfectly possible for ruling ‘elites’ (including semi-colonial ones) to maintain and even enhance their material position over measurable periods despite an absence of ‘self-sustaining growth’. The abstraction of the theory totally fails to take account of the presumed chronological compression of the elite’s realization of its true ‘interests’. Until 1959, the tide had been firmly in its favour—cocoa earnings were rising, and imports and exports in balance. We are invited to believe that a self-generating burst of insight occurred between 1959–61 leading to a complete reversal of political-economic direction.

Even the factual basis is shaky: the shift towards manufacturing industry is considerably exaggerated. Comparison of the Second and Seven Year Development Plans shows that the shift represented only one-sixth of planned expenditure, and in fact evolved logically out of earlier expenditure on infrastructure. Secondly, the ‘starvation’ model grossly over-simplifies the structural problem of 1961, which was that *receipts to the farmer* actually *rose* by about 40 per cent over the previous year (due to an increased quantum of production) thus precipitating a severe exchange crisis, given the openness or ‘innocence’ of the economy.

Ideology

However, the root deficiency in all this resides in the abandonment of the theoretical sensitivity displayed in the earlier analysis. In particular the nuanced class analysis and recognition of the relative social autonomy and plasticity of the political class in formation is lost to view. Yet it is precisely this social *uncertainty* and susceptibility to multiple determinations and influences which make the dimension of *consciousness* so crucial to the analysis—a dimension consistently under-estimated by Fitch and Oppenheimer. The contradictory situation and experience of these typically transitional and partial postcolonial ruling groups is mediated through the transformations, incoherences, oscillations, ‘false’ and illusory representations and reconciliations at the heart of *ideology*. This is one of the most interesting features of the CPP’s turn, which involved a new dynamic impulse in the field of ideological formation; indeed, it is precisely the new articulation of ideology

organization emerging in the 1960's which made socialist Ghana something of a model type in possible postcolonial African development.

Unsurprisingly, this ideological movement had instrumental and mystifying components; but it cannot be fully understood or explained in its particularity if it is reduced to mere manipulation. The whole Nkrumaist ideological complex was undergoing profound mutation in the 1960's. This process had two particularly striking features: the attempt to transcend the 'African Socialism' current of thought in favour of a more universal and scientific theory; and the related effort to institutionalize and accelerate the formation of an *ideological vanguard* of cadres who might then strive to make ideology a mass force (Winneba). This development, marked as it was by bizarre juxtapositions and unresolved contradictions, nevertheless acquires considerable significance when placed in the whole *trajectory* of ideological evolution since the 1940's.

Why is it that so little sense of this emerges from the text? Perhaps the answer is that Fitch and Oppenheimer fail to comprehend the ideological dimension *historically*; instead, they content themselves with some early remarks (p. 19) on the contradictory elements in Nkrumah's theoretical positions, which then remain *external* to the analysis of the developmental dialectic.

Thus, we really fail to penetrate the 1961 transition. A simple historical reconstruction of the conjuncture might have helped: it would certainly take us beyond the terms supplied and would focus attention on the mediation in consciousness of the critical developments of 1960-61—most notably, the profound impact of the Congo crisis (unmentioned by Fitch and Oppenheimer), the long visit to the socialist countries, the General Strike of September 1961, and the immediate crisis within the party which culminated in the 1961-62 purges of a substantial proportion of 'historic leaders'.⁵

This deficiency has been discussed at some length because it mars what

⁵ Interesting sidelights on the impingement of the Congo affair on Ghanaian politics are found in Major-General Alexander's hilarious reflections, *African Tightrope—My Two Years as Nkrumah's Chief of Staff* (Pall Mall, 1965). On the significance of the tour of the socialist countries, the following passage by E. N. Omaboe, (former Chief Government Statistician and Head of the National Planning Commission, now Chairman of the Economic Committee of the NLC), is rich with implication. 'The President and a number of his Ministers and high-ranking party officials paid an official visit to the Soviet Union, China and other East European countries in 1961. During their visit they had a chance to have explained to them the techniques of planning in these countries. They were naturally impressed by the rapid economic advance that these countries had made and they were able to compare the Second 5 Year Plan back in Ghana with the development plans of these countries. It is likely that they came to the conclusion that their plan was no plan at all. The decision was therefore taken to scrap it and to work on a new plan that would possess the basic characteristics of socialist development plans. This, incidentally (sic), would be in line with the cpr's socialist aspirations.' (See E. N. Omaboe, 'The Process of Planning', *A Study of Contemporary Ghana—Vol. 1*, Ed. by Walter Birmingham, I. Neustadt, & E. N. Omaboe, Allen & Unwin, 1966). This seems to support the relative plasticity hypothesis; it certainly makes one ponder.

is the first serious critique of Ghana's 'socialist' phase—and what could have perhaps developed into a definitive interpretation if the authors had not yielded to exigencies of haste in completing the book. Even so, the final chapter, 'Peaceful Coexistence in One Country', is a real contribution to the demystification of the socialist experience of the 1960's.

Two basic points are made. First, that through its accumulated praxis of earlier years the CPP had demobilized its 'potential' class support (among urban and rural proletariat, exploited tenant and debtor farmers, etc) for a socialist experiment. This political support was *indispensable* however, if the leadership was seriously determined to confront foreign banks, commercial firms and mining enterprises, to create and defend its independent currency, to industrialize and to base accumulation upon a rapidly growing state sector. As Fitch and Oppenheimer note, this would have necessitated a revolutionary transformation in land relations and a complete overhaul of the party and parapolitical organizations, which by this time had become bureaucratized and sedimented. In fact, the practice of the final years showed that the top leadership was unable or unwilling to effect this revolutionary overhaul of its political instruments: the spectacular purges, trials and appeals ('Dawn Broadcast', etc) merely revealed this inability to transform the CPP and its satellite formations by mobilization from the base up. The party was not re-tooled but, increasingly, by-passed through reliance upon state machinery and methods: steady enlargement of the Presidency, personal absorption of party functions by the President, annual postponement of party conferences and elections which effectively obliterated any clearly constituted party organs, the wholesale importation of expatriate personnel to staff the Ideological Institute, which fell directly under the President, etc.

Thus, a structural relationship is perceived between the defaults and errors of the earlier phase and the misconceived, contradictory 'socialism' of the later years: the one prefigured the other. In particular, the authors suggest, without going into great detail, that what was really occurring was a *re-negotiation* of terms with foreign capital (with accompanying redistribution of surplus). For the introduction of import exchange controls, the multiplication of state and parastatal economic institutions, and so on, did not signify the elimination or expropriation of foreign private capital (over 50 per cent of finance for the 7 Year Plan was to come from private capital) but merely a transformation and re-definition of its *mode of linkage* with the Ghanaian state. Increasingly this came to focus around two pivots: the import licensing system; and suppliers credits. A new and gross fusion between the State and private sector took shape, expressed in the institutionalization of commission-bribes, and in the loss of any *integral commanding strategy*.⁶ Some of the

⁶ Douglas Rimmer noted the apparent loss of all control over, or comprehensive knowledge of, the extension of external debt: 'In 1964, realization of the growth charge imposed on the balance of payments by debt servicing and repayments induced the Government to make a serious effort to find out what its external obligations were. Thus, while the *Economic Survey* 1963 recorded the country's external debt as only £38 million, including £20 million in suppliers' credits, the *Economic Survey* 1964, on the basis of improved information, records a total external debt

documentation on this was provided by the Abraham Commission on Trade Malpractices, set up in the declining months of the CPP régime; more has been added by the 'De-Nkrumahization' campaign of the successor régime. what is revealed is a jungle of chicanery and mutual conning by all parties involved—the Ghana National Trading Corporation, UAC, The Ministry of Trade, Parkinson Howard, the Drevisi Group etc—leading to bankruptcies among smaller retailers, white elephant projects, soaring external debt and interest charges, and a steady flow of business to the Swiss banks which administered the numbered accounts of relevant Ghanaian officials.

Even the vaunted Volta Project—'living proof' of the co-operation between sectors to their 'mutual advantage'—would give Ghana power with no assured market and a smelter without an integrated aluminium industry. For 30 years Kaiser may *tranship* alumina, mined in Jamaica and processed in the USA. Socialism, or a 'higher' form of neo-colonialism? As Fitch and Oppenheimer put it: 'The whole process operates on a much more sophisticated level, but the essential relationship remains unchanged'.

* * *

The historically possible

The central problem raised by *Ghana: End of An Illusion* is obvious. *How far was a 'real' socialist option and strategy historically possible?* If we look into the implied 'positive' of Fitch and Oppenheimer's negative assessment of the CPP experience, some doubts arise.

The field of reference is very bizarre. The *only* positive pole of reference is found in 'Portuguese' Guinea. In fact, Guinea is the only external reference *tout court*. From all available evidence, the PAIGC appears to be waging an exemplary liberation war; but how relevant is this quite different moment of struggle to the Ghanaian situation? Economy, society, political forms and policy of the colonial power differ radically from that of colonial Gold Coast. Comparison with Ivory Coast, Western Nigeria and Cameroun would surely have been more relevant and might have offered a more instructive perspective on Ghanaian developments.

The reasoning underlying this direction of reference towards Portuguese Guinea appears dangerously close to a fetishization of armed struggle, whose praxis serves as 'the functional equivalent of the 19th-century industrial war between proletarians and capitalists' for today's oppressed nations. If armed struggle is seen as the *only* possible historical vector of an authentic anti-imperialist and socialist revolution, it is clear that the Ghanaian experience can be written off *ab origine*. It is difficult to grapple with this thesis since it is presented only as a lapidary and apocalyptic conclusion. As the authors do not argue that armed struggle was a *possible* and *preferable* choice at any specific point

£187 million, at least £157 million of which are suppliers' credits with the bulk of repayment commitments concentrated in the next four to six years.' See 'The Crisis in The Ghana Economy', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1.

in the period covered by the book, it is perhaps more interesting to consider two other aspects of the implicit positive model.

The distinctive political alternative they offer is that of a political party which made the situation and demands of the most oppressed classes (urban and rural proletariat, sharecroppers, indebted tenant farmers) the absolute 'moral imperative' of its organization and action. This class-based party, acting for and through the oppressed but potentially revolutionary strata of society, could alone have provided the conscious support for a socialist path of development—with all its costs and risks. Instead, the CPP demobilized these 'potential' forces.

There are several important issues here. Firstly, of course, it is inaccurate to imply that the CPP took no account of the needs and demands of these strata: viz. the activity of the CPC in combating rural usury and assisting debtor farmers⁷; and the July 1960 Minimum Wage legislation (which receives no mention from Fitch and Oppenheimer, and which shifted the general wage level sharply upwards).

Secondly, the sociological and organizational characteristics of urban and rural proletariat must be brought into sharper focus. Notably, we have to recognize that this was still essentially a pre-industrial colonial economy. The authors, however, assign a critical importance to the Trade Unions, seeing in the 1958 Industrial Relations Act and the 1961 General Strike damning evidence of the CPP's abandonment of socialism. They particularly deny that the urban proletariat was a 'labour aristocracy' on the grounds of low wages, falling real incomes, and high unemployment.

The Ghanaian work-force is, in fact, highly fluid and transitional. The 1960 Census describes 57 per cent of adult male workers as 'migrants'. Over 15 per cent of the male labour force is unemployed. There is a large unskilled and lumpen proletarian mass. *But the unions do not represent this mass.* In 1957-58, only 26 per cent of the labour force was unionized—exactly the same percentage as ten years previously. This 'organized working class' constitutes a relatively stable kernel of the employed, particularly well established among skilled and artisan categories. In this sense, it is an 'aristocracy'. The difficulties of organizing the large, fluctuating, mobile lumpen strata were certainly not overcome by the CPP; but in any event it is highly dubious whether the could in Ghanaian conditions constitute the *force d'appui* of a revolutionary strategy. A much more likely outcome of their organization would have been the institutionalization of an equally 'consumptionist' and politically even more ambiguous corporation of the type of the 'Syndicat des Chômeurs' in Dahomey. As for the rural proletariat and sharecroppers in the cocoa sector, this too is a rather mobile and sms (around 200,000) and deeply mystified segment. It is not clear whether the category is expanding, stationary or declining. Organization potential is low.

⁷ The importance of rural indebtedness in the Ghanaian economy has frequently been exaggerated, however.

But what in any case is a maximalist strategy for a small colonis country (6-7 million), heavily dependent on cocoa monoculture an mining, in which banking, administration, shipping, and the bulk o external commerce and internal credit were in foreign hands? Even presuming a well-organized, class-based party, what could have been achieved by armed struggle, expropriation without compensation, etc. It is hard to avoid the suspicion of a hidden 'Cuban illusion'. Th authors do not try to assess the possible extent of assistance to b expected from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries; nor d they even look closely into the historical practice of the USSR in it actual economic relations with CPP Ghana. The evidence would no have been especially encouraging.

Perhaps we should honestly admit that the *field of present alternatives* i merely obscured by schemas of the 'Socialism or Neo-colonialism' type. As this book shows, what is needed now is a much finer discrimination of the variant forms of a 'neo-colonialism' which embraces much of th world; and which therefore has to be definitively liquidated as an autonomous category. The starting point for a lucid understanding of contemporary counter-revolutionary dynamics is a recognition that th historically necessary should not be confounded with the historically possible.

Indian Realities

Oswald Stack

The world seems suddenly to have woken up to the fact that India is in a mess—because it has been extremely badly governed. British liberals and socialists have been among the chief perpetrators of the myths that India is a democracy and that the forces of democracy are (or have been) embodied in the Congress (or in part of it).

India is not in trouble because it is over-populated. Agricultural land is more than adequate. There is twice as much cultivable land *per capita* as there is in China; per person engaged in agriculture there is twice the amount available in Vietnam—and four times that available in Egypt. Everyone knows about India's spectacular problems: 50 per cent more cows per head than Switzerland, which is a dairy farming country (India's bovine population is under-productive through malnutrition) 75 per cent of all potential animal fertilizer wasted—and of the 25 per cent that is collected three-quarters is exported. This is all so irrational it would seem only rational to ask why. Yet the blindingly clear answer—because of the country's social structures—has been incessantly evaded by 'friends of India' from the *New Statesman* to the *Times* via the *Economist*. It has also been evaded by the Congress. Professor Bettelheim has shown convincingly that the problems of agriculture can only be solved by collective solutions—which the régime has done nothing to implement. In the one area where a land reform looked likely—Kerala under the Namboodiripad government in 1957–59—the central government, in the person of Indira Gandhi, intervened to get the administration overthrown. Yet the projected land reform was actually less radical than the Congress' own programmes on paper. This even more than the assault on democracy in the formal sense, indicates the nature of Congress rule. It is utterly wrong to confuse the Congress administration and the Indian people. Support for the Indian people does not entail support for the Congress—it precludes it.

The first task of socialists here is to present the facts. The facts are that most of the leaders of Congress are either corrupt or reactionary both. It is ridiculous to go on claiming, as many people have, that people like Indira Gandhi or Asoka Mehta are 'left-wing'. Ind-

Gandhi personally organized the wrecking of the only major attempt at social reform in independent India. Asoka Mehta has presided over a planning organization whose main task has been to deceive Indians and well-meaning foreigners into thinking that India would like to be a socialist country (whatever that may mean). Planning in India was launched by big business (the Bombay Plan, 1944). It is not and never has been an instrument of socialist change. It is purely indicative—and even its predictions bear little relationship to reality: thus the second five-year plan which was originally intended to give priority to industry ended up with industry in fourth place as regards actual allocations. The ratio between national accumulation and foreign assistance has been going *inversely* to the country's requirements. The share of the public sector in accumulation has declined. Public investments have served to help private investment.

It is obviously impossible to abstract purely political behaviour from the social background. No doubt India is in some senses a politically *alive* country. This is partly a product of despair, which can only manifest itself in violence or apathy. Thus both the present wave of massive violence and the country's incapacity at any level to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation must be explained by this deep and deadly despair which pervades every-day life. India has plenty of resources: but they can only be mobilised if there is a simultaneous assault on the social structures. Thus, for example, in Bengal a survey showed that on an average each farmer was having to cultivate *eight* different plots of land, averaging about $1/3$ acre each. The same province has also produced instances of up to *forty* layers of intermediate tenants. A vast body of parasitic intermediaries lives off those who are actually working. In these conditions it is almost impossible for anyone farming a small unit to take the risk of introducing any kind of technical change—and yet *willingness to innovate runs in almost directly inverse proportion to the size of the holding*. Unused capacity in industry can be gauged by business' ability to boost production in certain goods by as much as 60 per cent overnight when prices become more attractive. This is the great tragedy of India: its vast unused or misused resources, of which labour is the most abundant. The Congress government has done virtually nothing to mobilize this vast reservoir for development. Mobilization does not have to be 'idealistic'; labour on public works projects in China after the revolution was paid. But the labour was mobilized. Until this is done in India the economic situation cannot improve—nor will it be possible for the vast mass of Indians now stagnating in their villages and the slums of the cities to take any conscious part in altering their own way of life. It is absurd to think that a political system functioning in these circumstances can be called a democracy—or that the organization which has presided over these 20 years of immobility can be thought to embody dynamic progress.

Political behaviour in this situation is bound to depend very much on local factors. The personal situation of the majority of most voters is so desperate it is impossible for them to extend their horizon beyond the problem of staying alive. Moreover, it is quite impossible to consider politics as homogeneous nationally. Even where an organization such as the Congress exists throughout the country it differs greatly

from area to area. Even parties which appear at first sight to be less elusive—such as the Swatantra—turn out to be quite different in, say, Madras and Rajasthan. The most extreme example of this phenomenon is the SSP, which is the closest ally of the Jan Sangh in the Hindi-speaking states in the north, and the number one ally of the 'left' Communists in Kerala. There have been cases of attempted alliances between the Swatantra and the Communists in both Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. All this to indicate that politics is highly personalized. Perhaps the only party which can stir people up on an 'ideological' issue is the Jan Sangh. And then it is cows.

The absolute predominance of local issues has been vividly demonstrated by the recent elections; voter response has also tended to be both non-ideological and negative, in the sense of often being purely anti-Congress. Abstentionism has been high among literate groups as well as the peasantry. Disenchantment with the Congress has at last seeped into all strata in virtually every area of the Union—from the highly literate states (Kerala, Madras) to the economically advanced (Punjab, West Bengal) to the economically depressed (Orissa) and the politically backward (Rajasthan). Yet the reasons for the defeat of Congress are different in each area. Thus the party leaders, who are often better known than the party itself, went down for different causes. Atulya Ghosh, the boss of West Bengal, demunicipalized part of the Calcutta public transport system and lifted price controls on rice to raise money for his lavish campaign—but thus ultimately lost himself too much of the popular vote. Patnaik in Orissa had already been tried and found guilty on graft charges and admitted owing the government vast sums of money in back taxes. Patil was blamed in the public eye for a series of spectacular train crashes during the autumn (some of them due to sabotage), as well as frequent hijackings of grain consignments. Kamaraj went down because he had lost much of his local base (the DMK already controlled the two largest towns in Madras state and had thus undermined Congress' vote-raising machine) and was held responsible for his failure to block the imposition of Hindi as a national language (Madras state has three times the national average of English speakers and hence would stand to lose heavily if English is abandoned).

Non-Congress control of so many states will have to be accepted by the central government. The most important effect of this in the long run will be the erosion of the Congress patronage machine at the local level, which must be the prelude to a massive Congress defeat at the next general election. At the same time the new state governments will be in a position to highlight the acute contradictions between local state interests and those which the Congress will attempt to impose from the centre—these contradictions will be most acute and most visible in the questions of taxation and food. The central government will in theory be in a position to strangle any local administration it disapproves of, unless there is a big change in the existing taxation law (which the DMK and others are pressing for). But the financial contradictions are bound to generate considerable social momentum, and at this stage, state isolationism would not necessarily be a bad thing. Kerala, for example, earns India four times as much foreign exchange

exports as she is allowed to consume in imports. During the recent shortages in the state the central government was unable to put sufficient pressure on Mysore to move some of her surplus to Kerala. Clearly greater local rights will be a priority everywhere (a plea for secession is now a criminal offence).

Concentration on local issues, attuned to the restricted horizons of the masses, will lead to politicization around the fundamental problems—landholding, social structures, distribution of wealth. The reactionary policies of the central government (soaring defence expenditure, chauvinistic foreign policies) will be revealed as ignoring the needs of the peasants and the oppressed urban strata. When the states with progressive administrations (Kerala, West Bengal) do actually push through reforms this will in itself have a colossal galvanizing effect on their own states—and spill over into the neighbouring areas. Increased politicization is a precondition of revolutionary change in India—and it is certain to be boosted by the new situation in the states, even where the régime is politically ambiguous (e.g. Madras) or even straightly reactionary (Orissa). It is much too simplistic to pretend, as most of the British press has done, that the setback to the Congress is a uniform catastrophe. The main effect of the election will be to enable large tracts of the subcontinent to shake themselves out of the state of depoliticized oppression in which Congress rule had kept them—and thus allow some of the country's intolerable contradictions to come to the surface.

India and the Labour Party

Many questions suggest themselves about the influence that India may have had on the Labour Party, a good deal stronger in all probability than the party's influence on India; about India as one of the taproots of the peculiar British social-democratic mentality. It could be argued that the Labour Party talked nonsense from the cradle, but there is a sense in which it can be said to have fuddled its wits by thinking about India, and then to have become unable to think realistically about anything. There was genuine anti-imperialism in the early movement, just as there was anti-war feeling, and both helped to get going. But just as men like Ramsay MacDonald hated the thought of war but were little concerned to explore the causes of it, so they were sorry to see anyone in the empire ill-used, but had little interest in imperialism, in what mac

empires and kept them at work. Hence it came about that while the day-dreamed of transforming the empire into a true federation, in reality the empire was transforming them. They were soon growing content to change it by giving it a new look, contemplating it in a new light, as Hegel did with Prussian autocracy. From this point it was natural to go on to think of revolutionizing British society in the same painless way, of dealing with capitalism by altering the colour of the spotlight.

Effective contact with the Indian masses was impossible, and confronted with their vast bewildering misery Labour came to think of humanity at large as an amorphous, incalculable mass, at best a crowd of children at worst a bloodthirsty mob. This was already how too many Labour men, really Liberals with an interest in social welfare, instinctively viewed the masses at home, and the Indian myriads, chronically haunting their thoughts, deepened their mistrust. In India, again, to work for progress with and through the people was impossible; they could only think of working through the existing bureaucracy, in its way a respectable and efficient one. The Labour Party had no difficulty in crediting it with other virtues—neutrality between government and people, willingness to be used as an instrument of radical change—which it did not possess. From this illusion it was a short step to endowing the civil service at home with similar virtues, and to believing that all the changes Britain required could be carried out by merely pressing the right civil service buttons. A purely bureaucratic approach to India reinforced a bureaucratic approach to Britain. Labour has always disliked any kind of mass struggle, at home as in the colonies; it thought suffragettes very undesirable people, as it did the agitators in Bengal and Maharashtra.

All in good time

Meanwhile the tendency engendered by British history to think in spacious terms, of decades instead of years and centuries instead of decades, to be unwilling to recognize that history now was speeding up, was deepened by contact with India, which seemed to think in aeons, or rather to be above thinking of time at all. India's problems were extremely complex; preoccupation with them helped to make Britain's too look intricate beyond the wit of man, and to slow down still further Labour's habitual mode of progression, each foot held cautiously poised in the air for ten minutes before being brought back to the ground. If the Indian people had to be matured so very gradually for independence, the British people must be ripened slowly for socialism. Any fretful impatience was to be checked. Tories could justify their repressive policies in India by pointing to Labour's—those which Labour could only fatuously reply that though the method might be the same when it was in office, the spirit was different. Even this difference was not always claimed; we hear Wedgwood consoling a political prisoner in India by telling him that his Tory jailers had the best of intentions at heart. More frankly Labour took refuge in the formula that a government must govern, i.e. that Labour in office must rule India on Tory lines, and could indulge the luxury of thinking about reform only when in opposition. 'Realism' swathed in mental

riddle at the India Office easily spilled over into realism in other departments of State. Today the Labour Government's stock excuse for its Tory policies is that it has, after all, to govern.

Bureaucratism screened itself behind an exaggerated reverence for Parliament. Parliament's awe-inspiring authority over a world-wide empire helped to foster a kind of mystical respect for this inmost repository of power—not to mention that ~~men~~ ^{men} touring India were always treated, though seldom regarded, with profound respect by officialdom. In their conviction that debates in the hall at Westminster represented the omnipotent tide of history, these men resembled a child holding a sea-shell to its ear and thinking that it was listening to the ocean. If this oracle could answer the riddle of India, it could surely cope with Britain's miniature ones, such as how socialism was to be inaugurated. But for Parliament to bring its full wisdom and benignity to bear on India, it was clearly to be desired that all parties should speak with the same voice. It would be unjust to India to treat it as a party issue. . . . This specious bi-partisanship, steadily adhered to, was bound to spread into a similar approach to home affairs. From telling Indians that Tories were not such bad fellows as they looked, Labour began telling itself or its voters the same thing. When MacDonald deserted the party and formed a 'National Government' (one of whose chief items of business would be India), he might be said to have simply carried this train of thought to its logical conclusion.

Britons took very little interest in India while it was their responsibility, and have taken still less interest since. It may be wondered how many of them will want to read a precise survey, or obituary, of Labour Party policy towards India before independence and partition came about in 1947; a study as it might be called of the dead bones of something that was never very much alive. All the same, anyone to whom socialism or the Labour movement are a concern ought to read such an account of the meanderings of Labour thinking, because the Labour Party, though not India, is still with us, and still meandering.

Labour on India

Labour leaders and spokesmen did little about India, but talked and wrote a great deal, and there is a ponderous literature of books pamphlets, memoirs, by them or about them and the Indian leader they were in contact with. All this, and a vast quantity of files and journals and conference reports, M. Georges Fischer in his *Le Parti travailliste et la décolonisation de l'Inde*¹ has painstakingly sifted, and he has made use too of some unpublished materials from India Office record. He displays a masterly command of the British political scene and its ins and outs, never an easy thing to acquire about any foreign country. He has written a similar study of the 'decolonization' of the Philippines by the US, and draws our attention briefly at a good many points to developments there and elsewhere in the world that had some relevance to India. He notes for example that the anarchical condition of China in the 1920's and 1930's lent weight to gloomy predictions

¹ François Maspéro. 24. 65. frs.

what would happen if the British left India. He writes with a judicious detachment almost too complete, commenting now and again on the inconsistencies or fallacies of Labour reasoning, but on the whole perhaps appearing to take it too seriously, too much at its face value.

The work is arranged chronologically, with the first World War as the main dividing-line; the epoch before 1914, when the Labour Party was comparatively youthful and elastic, is in a way the most interesting but the years between 1918 and 1939 are the most important and occupy the biggest share of space. An introductory survey reminds us that few Liberals wanted to give India up; and the Labour Party separating itself off from Liberalism—even then the ailing offspring of an elderly parent—started with the idea not of breaking up the empire but of transforming it, socializing it, from within. There was discussion of a federation of working-class movements in all the empire countries, to be led by the British: an attractive vision, but too much akin to Labour illusions today of a Common Market of monopoly capitalists magically transformed by the presence in it of a Britain occasionally run by a government whose members occasionally make speeches about socialism.

After the Great War, with the prevailing sensation, well described by Fischer, of shipwreck and collapse, there was a more convulsive clinging to empire. It was the time of the Waste Land, and colonies, all Europe felt, were convenient fragments to shore against its ruins. Businessmen felt this in one way; Labour leaders, groping for some thing solid, and never conscious of *socialism* as a solid, in another. Spiritually the contrast between Tory greed and Labour idealism was doubtless strong; materially it was too slight for India to be much aware of. In 1925 the TUC struck a more radical note on colonialism (p. 125) but the General Strike of the following year seems to have done nothing to make Labour see class conflict in Britain and India in the same perspective. Economic relations, Indian markets and Lancashire jobs, are mentioned only here and there; they are not Fischer's subject, but the consequences of the Slump starting in 1929, for any chance of concessions to Indian nationalism, deserve more prominence. Another landmark that might have been made to stand out is the Labour schism of 1931, when its leading group headed by Ramsay MacDonald went over divested of disguise to the capitalist camp. The rest of the party might have been expected to be stung into some show of fighting spirit; instead it seemed cowed by electoral defeat, bewildered by economic crisis, less able than ever to think radically about India. It had been taught, after all, to think of capitalism not as the enemy but as a sometimes annoying neighbour.

The Simon Commission

The event that does stand out in this main section of the book is the Simon Commission of 1928. One of the things that strained Indian trust in Labour's goodwill, a trust quite lively before 1914 but steadily curdling into scepticism, was Labour's willingness to join in a Commission to pronounce on India's destiny, made up of Englishmen alone and universally repudiated and boycotted by Indians. This dis-

not prevent the seven members from being a very happy family (p. 190), the two Labour men collaborating cordially with the rest, whose chief, Simon, had been one of the arch-enemies of the General Strike. One of these two worthies was Attlee. Of the few actors of that day still on the stage now he comes out of the record badly enough (one who comes out better is Fenner Brockway). Attlee found only one or two trifling points to differ from his Tory colleagues on. It was much the same when their report came before Parliament. There were shades of opinion on the Labour benches, but no more than on the Conservative side, where men like Hoare stood apart from the wild men like Salisbury (a familiar name on such occasions of imperial history) and Churchill.

Even a Tory must take some twinge of comfort from being able to feel that he is not as other Tories are—not one of the worst of them, not a real Malignant. Compromise as Fischer remarks is the essence of the parliamentary method; at Westminster it usually meant Labour giving up its principles and Conservatism giving up a few commas or semi-colons—though Labour might have defended itself as to India by saying that it had no principles to abandon. Moderate Tories exerting themselves against Tory extremists had an excuse for not being as progressive as they might have liked to be, and sensible Labour men could feel that it was right to go along with them. These players in the Westminster comedy were so much accustomed to being taken seriously in Britain that they were always surprised when their performance failed to convince Indian spectators equally.

With the Second World War, Indian disillusionment with Labour became complete. Fischer's 'Epilogue' on this final period may look, more than the rest of the work, a trifle academic in approach. It obscures somewhat the blunt fact that Britain's governing class, Tory or Labour, was still determined, *non. con.*, to hang on to India as long as India could possibly be hung on to. As late as the election of 1945 only 8 per cent of Labour candidates thought India worth a mention: Bevin was promising no more than that India should be transferred to the Commonwealth Office—and this was the man who as Foreign Secretary was soon to show his true colours by helping to restore French imperialism in Indo-China and Dutch in Indonesia, and using Indian troops for the purpose. When Labour took office in 1946 many of its leading spirits were still convinced that Dominion Status could not be conferred on India hastily. They had to change their minds before long simply because it became obvious that the only alternative to getting out was to be thrown out. Fischer sees this, but gives it only a cursor mention and seems to treat pressure of American opinion as an equal factor with the prospect of Indian revolt.

Saved from Socialism

Brailsford, recognizing the inevitable, breathed a sigh at Labour having to renounce the hope of leading India and Burma and Ceylon to socialism (pp. 316-17)—as if this had been the party's dearest, most cherished wish, when in half a century it had not 'led' India or Burma or Ceylon half an inch towards socialism, and 20 years later has scarce

begin to lead his own country there! Yet the man who heaved this flatulent sigh was one of the best men in the movement.

Labour had not given India socialism; it was to take great pride, instead, in having helped to bestow—or impose—on India a parliamentary system which had nothing to do with socialism, and which as Fischer says in an alien environment was often to be a mere sham. With it went a bureaucracy carefully chosen and trained by Toryism, which has been a further obstacle to social progress. By its strategic retreat from those colonies Labour was helping to check the spread of communism there: the boast was Attlee's. In other words, since communism was in Asia the only kind of socialism, Labour's last thought was not to aid socialism, but to trip it up.

Fischer's concentration throughout is on the leaders; he is satisfied that they alone really counted, because the rank and file were indifferent (pp. 8-9). Whether he is right or not, a parallel study of the rank and file is to be desired, along with the question of how far apathy was the fault of the leadership. He reminds us that the party's working machinery, and the influences and impulses activating it, were complex, and that it is over-simple to explain everything in terms of manipulation by a group of managers. Managers do manipulate, nevertheless, in every party, and moments did occur when the membership showed signs of discontent with official policy on India, and leaders had to stand by with soft soap—very much as today over Vietnam.

In his ordinary mood, it may be allowed, the British workman did display a massive, good-humoured indifference to the plight of his Indian brethren. If in some ways the British ruling class can be said to have behaved towards India less badly than it might have done, the British working class behaved far worse, judged by the standard of the old ideal of international fraternity, than it ought to have done. We are at liberty to think of the demoralization in the movement as a reciprocal effect, the stolid mass dragging down the leadership as well as the other way round. In any case this leadership was not one that would have challenged the apathy of its supporters, or blown bugle-blasts, or ever penny-whistles, for the sake of India. The Liberal party in its best day, did challenge imperialism over Ireland, and if it had perished finally in the crusade would have perished gloriously. Unhappily it was brought back to life by the undertakers and set marching toward Flanders.

It would have been useful, as a check on Labour Party attitudes, to consider the Communist Party as well. Back in 1900 the old undivided International was calling for socialist organizations to be set up in colonial regions. Little pressure was put on the Labour Party by the International to take a more strenuous line on India, but it had some healthy effect on the party to belong to a dynamic international movement. After the post-war split this stimulus was lost: the Second International was now tame and merely European, while the workers' movements growing up in the colonies were communist, and therefore anathema to the Labour Party. British Communism recognized in principle a duty to assist the workers in India, and in practice did in

some measure assist them. Whether it could have done more for them, or to enlighten British workers, are points for investigation.

The ILP was distinctly better on India than the Labour Party, trying at times to act as a ginger group. As between the trade union bosses and the more literate or bourgeois spokesmen, the comparison is often in favour of the latter, who were multiplied in the 1920's by the influx of former Liberals. Lord Olivier, Secretary for India in the first Labour cabinet, had been governor of Jamaica, and looked like a Spanish grandee; he had been at least a benevolent autocrat to his subjects. There is another distinction to be drawn (Fischer might have made more of it) between those of the middle-class group who were principally intellectuals and publicists, like Cole or Laski, and the whole-time politicians like MacDonald or Attlee, and the comparison here favours the intellectuals, though not by a wide margin considering their greater freedom of speech. The men from mine or bench mostly had less knowledge of India, less interest, fewer misgivings, a more naïve egotism, all helping to draw them towards the point of view summed up in Bevin's 'jolly old empire'. The others could not be so light-hearted, even if their subtler formulae varied from Bevin's by shades often too fine for common perception.

Hot air

Altogether, the broad impression left by these hundreds of quotations of Labour Party utterances is a depressing one of wishful thinking, unrealism, poverty. The reader who can remember listening impatiently to some of these utterances before 1947, and now with this book in hand can look back over the full record, meticulously put together and not unsympathetically presented by Fischer, may feel some touches of regret for some sectarian intolerance of his own, some youthful vivacity of expression long since exchanged for the soberly muffled accents of middle age—but he is likely to see in the record as a whole very much what he saw at the time: a long cloud-procession of platitude and prevarication, flim-flam and flapdoodle, humbug and hot-air.

It might then be concluded that the record was not worth studying in all this detail, that the history of the Labour Party is simply irrelevant to the history of British India. Fischer makes the reasonable, though negative, claim on behalf of the party that when withdrawal was unavoidable it had the sense to withdraw more promptly than a Tory Government would have done. It might also be maintained that the party's existence put some restraint on British behaviour in India which might otherwise have been more rough and ready. Too much shooting would have disturbed too many illusions, too many of those delicate psychological checks and balances on which depended the ability of Labour men to believe in, and therefore to keep their followers believing in, the British Raj. In fact the real subject of interest is the Labour Party much more than India, and political history much less than political psychology.

It deserves to be taken into account, of course, that Indian affairs were complicated and awkward; sheer size made them seem, more than the

of any country in the world, insoluble. It is true also that Indian spokesmen advanced very slowly towards a demand for anything like complete independence, and that India was, by and large, very poorly led. Fischer is right to regard the communal issue as a real one, even if it was exploited at times by the ruling power. Yet on the one hand Labour's nervous fancy was apt to inflate difficulties and hazards, to people Indian jungles with every species of paper tiger and serpent, and on the other hand these men very seldom suffered, at any rate in public, from any sense of being unequal to their mission of showing India the way forward. Laski in a mood of exasperation might talk of India as an impossible riddle, and Cole might suggest, as ought to have been suggested far oftener, that aid should be sought from the League of Nations; as a rule Labour suffered rather from a too complacent estimate of its qualifications for acting as guide and guardian, or Moral Tutor as teachers call themselves at Oxford, to three hundred million Indians. It might not be able to convince many Englishmen that it knew what was good for them, but it knew what was good for Hindus. There was some profundity here of conceit, if not of thought.

Englishmen abroad

In the early years quite a number of builders of the Labour Party saw India with their own eyes. Hyndman, whose name turns up frequently came of a family with Indian connections, and had himself worked in a princely territory. He was more forward-looking than most of the others, though erratic on this as on other topics, but he and his Socialist Democratic Federation really belonged to an earlier stage. Ramsay MacDonald—of whose political mentality Fischer gives a perceptive sketch (pp. 29-30)—visited India, wrote two books on it, prided himself on his special knowledge. How much such an inquirer really learned one is left speculating. British India was a country where it was deceptively easy for a British visitor to suppose that he was getting the hang of things, because there was a small educated class everywhere which spoke English—but extremely difficult for him really to get the hang of anything, without the channel of communication that Communism later on did something to provide. We have a diverting picture of Keir Hardie (another Scot, by the way, and the man who had staggered Westminster by turning up at the House in a cloth cap, as if bent on immediate red revolution) gravely conversing with a magistrate at Benares on the importance of encouraging landowners and others with a stake in the country, as a moderating influence. Benares with its thousand temples, swarming beggars and naked fakirs is a place where a Briton might well forget any distinction between cloth cap and top hat, and feel all the value of the grand British virtue, respectability.

Moreover these Labour tourists were going out with fixed preconceptions, with a ready-made hold-all of ideas which they were confident would hold India too. On fundamentals it never dawned on them that they had anything fresh to learn. This made it easier for them to squeeze what began as genuine sympathy for Indian toilers into a very British mould. The conclusion they quickly arrived at was that it would never do to give India independence prematurely, and so leave defenceless

workers at the mercy of their hard-hearted employers. As the national movement grew, and its demands stiffened, Labour's reaction was to shuffle backward. It became a stock argument against the Congress that it was financed and controlled by big businessmen; an argument that Tories, from motives of delicacy, could scarcely resort to, but were glad to have put forward by the Labour Party in their stead. Labour was coming down to spinning socialistic costumes as disguises for imperialism. It felt entitled to set up as a better friend and truer representative of the Indian masses than their own selfish bourgeoisie. It could appeal to them therefore to be patient, to wait until Labour should be in power at Westminster with a sufficient majority and sufficient leisure—then something could be done. If they must do something on their own account in the meantime, let them stick to trade union activity, or even start a party of their own, but not be misled into supporting the national movement and its self-interested demagogues.

British exploitation

It struck Indians, however, that while Labour was so indignant about exploitation of workers by Indian capitalists, it had much less to say about exploitation by British capitalists in India. Another little inconsistency can be detected in the 'British Committee on Indian Affairs' of the 1920's, made up mostly of Labour men but relying for its expenses chiefly, as Fischer tells us, on Indian Liberals and capitalists; to say nothing of the remarkable meanness of taking money from India for working or pretending to work for India. An excuse could be found on similar lines for reluctance to grant even tariff autonomy. The real objection to this was that by sheltering India's young industries it would mean stronger competition for Lancashire; the alleged reason was that it would mean stronger exploitation of workers by Indian millowners. Even Brockway could lean to the convenient view that India would do better to remain an agricultural country (p. 267). Conservatives like Churchill and Halifax were happy to agree that it would be very wrong to abandon India to its capitalists, and almost at the very end of the Raj we find Attlee quite of one mind with Churchill that Congress was too much dominated by financial and industrial interests. Neither thought of asking the other what interests the Tory Party was dominated by. The Westminster charade could hardly become more farcical; it reminds one of Cicero's question, how any two of Rome's official soothsayers could catch each other's eye in the street without bursting out laughing.

'Under active consideration'

In 1911, in the hopeful days before the first War, the Labour Party at TUC discussed a scheme for a sort of grand national consolidated trade union organization in India, to be got going by British unionists. Nothing, it scarcely needs to be said, was done. Later on as we know Labour often talked of helping trade unionism in India, by sending advisers, giving money, and so on, but there always happened to be some reason why the would-be good Samaritan was obliged to pass by on the other side of the street. More urgency came into the plans when Indian unionism was seen to be coming under Communist direction, but even

then it stuck at the level of urgent task. Everything Indian was perpetually in a state of being under active consideration by the Labour Party. What the party did do was to co-operate heartily, when in office, in jailing Indian trade union organizers, who either were Communists, or—merely by being active unionists—laid themselves open to suspicion of being such. The notorious Meerut Conspiracy trial was the grand demonstration of this. When Brockway at the Labour Party conference in 1930 hoped for a mass struggle in India against capitalists and millowners, the Labour Government spokesman was deeply shocked (p. 248). It was proper that Indian workers should not be duped by the patriotic claptrap of their bosses, but highly improper that they should think of doing anything against these bosses. The Indian working class was to be encouraged to stand on its own feet, so long as it stood perfectly still.

In the same way, on the political front Brockway was prepared to welcome Gandhi's non-violent civil disobedience—a harmless safety-valve for national agitation if ever one was invented—but most of his colleagues, Ramsay MacDonald in particular, recoiled from it in horror, as something indescribably subversive and sinister. For these men Order was coming to be as sovereign a virtue as for Metternich, and statesmanship the purging of public life from any taint of the old Adam, its refining by bleedings and exorcisms to the pure innocence of a Sunday-school picnic. Meanwhile, as Nehru complained, the conduct of the British authorities in India grew considerably more brutal, a fact that Labour failed to observe, or blamed on the Congress. It is not the schoolmaster's fault if his pupils compel him to use the birch. To this quietist philosophy, no news from India was good news.

Parliament

Labour's faith was pinned, for India as for Britain, to the parliamentary method. Parliament always had the great double advantage of explaining both why peaceful socialism was bound to come in the future, and why it was out of the question just now. With the same neatness it disposed of Indian independence; and just as this could come about only by the fiat of the British parliament, so India could be set free only to run itself by means of a parliament of its own, the one instrument of salvation. That parliamentarianism might not necessarily be the best system for a country with totally different traditions was a thought that occasionally obtruded itself. It occurred to Montagu, the Liberal Secretary of State responsible for the administrative reforms of 1919 who could see at least in theory that it might be good for India to be left free to find its own path, even if this meant an interlude of turmoil and strife. Men of the older British parties, more firmly linked with the old governing classes, had less superstitious reverence for Parliament than Labour newcomers felt; for them it was a convenient method, no the Ark of a Covenant. One or two Labour men were able to grasp that for India it might be desirable to think on new lines—Lord Strabolgi for instance, and Cole, but the thought scarcely ever entered the mind of the practising politicians.

When would India be given a real parliament of its own? When British

capitalism was ready to give India up, a vulgarian might have replied. But in that political fourth dimension where so much Labour thinking was carried on, the right way to look at it—especially for Indians to look at it—was that it would happen as soon as India could prove itself fit and ready for self-government. Hence the doctrine of criteria, the tests of fitness and maturity, and the perennial Labour recipe of a fresh commission of inquiry to go out with tape-measure and stethoscope and see how much progress towards fitness had been made since last time. Tests were various, though the essential one was always respect for Order, the patient's ability to maintain a fixed immobility like that of the fakir gazing at his navel. Clearly, for one thing, India would have to be able to undertake its own defence. In 1930 only a hundred out of three thousand officers were Indian, and the Labour Government envisaged a programme of training 20 or 25 new ones annually (pp. 202-4). This would produce the requisite number in little more than a century. Another cardinal test was education; here such a rapid advance could not be expected, and at the actual rate of progress it would take nearer a millennium than a century to abolish illiteracy. Meanwhile the Labour Party could be trusted to keep matters, as before, under active consideration. Again this approach opened up a broad field of agreement between sensible Labour men and moderate Tories. When Edgemoor Snow interviewed the Viceroy at Delhi during the second World War while the Japanese were approaching India and the national leader lay in jail, he found Lord Linlithgow regrettably convinced that Indians were not yet ripe for freedom—not yet ripe for this, that, and the other—not ripe yet (when the visitor as a last resort suggested this) for running co-operatives.

On issues like extensions of the franchise Labour's views were, Fisch writes, so full of contradictions and ambiguities as to invite ridicule (p. 214). Labour reasoning altogether had a tendency to revolve in circles. Few of the leaders believed in universal suffrage; the poor were not ripe, of course. Surely then they ought to be left to defend themselves by other means—but that meant unconstitutional action, which was absolutely ruled out even if the heavens fell—so the poor must rely on strictly legal methods—but this meant having votes. . . .

India was being trained for nationhood, or *refined* for it like a barrel of crude spirit slowly maturing in the cellar of British administration—but to Labour's adult eye all nationalist feeling was really infantile, as chronistic, out of harmony with an age when world federation was the goal to aim at. Labour was not proposing any surrender of Britain's own sovereignty, and its habit of preaching against nicotine with a cigar in its mouth was one of the things that irritated its audience. Nationalism in India moreover, Labour could not help feeling, was unpleasantly mixed up with religion. One really could not talk to a Hindu mystic like Gandhi—any more than one could talk to an atheistical communist, or a soulless capitalist, or an ignorant cooperator. Labour was always looking for someone it could talk to, someone like the Respectable Working-man it got on so well with at home. Unfortunately there were no respectable working-men in India; everyone was either too rich or too poor, too extremist or too apathetic, too tall or too short, and in the end one could really only talk to oneself. . . .

One third of India was composed of native states, ruled by princes whom the British had relied on increasingly since the Mutiny, and especially since the Congress grew troublesome. It might have been expected that Labour would not take kindly to these virtually irresponsible despots, or would wish to devise some suitability-tests for them too. On the contrary, it scarcely ever occurred to it that these potentates could stand in need of any ripening or maturing. Keir Hardie had given them a good certificate, on the strength of progress-reports from two of them, Mysore and Baroda. There always were a few reputable princes; at the other end of the scale there were some fit only for immediate extinction. In between, most of the princelings and their feudal hangers-on were a gaudy mob of boobies or blackguards. It would have been a miracle if they were anything else, considering their temptations and lack of restraints. Tories have always warned socialists against expecting too much from weak human nature.

Long after Keir Hardie, when some in the Labour movement had misgivings, Lord Strabolgi was ready to defend the princes, and Attlee in the Simon Commission to uphold the sanctity of moth-eaten British treaties with them. The sanctity of contract has always been a bourgeois imperative. It is said of one trade union boss of that time, J. H. Thomas, that when honoured by an interview with George V he chivalrously assured the king that he was ready to stand or fall with the monarchy. Such a man might be dazzled even by the feeble and distant glitter of India's petty coronets. Thomas was in any case a strong empire man, and it would be instructive to examine how regularly the worst elements in the Labour movement were the most imperialistic. All the Labour spokesmen were so scrupulous in their respect for constitutional freedom elsewhere that they could never bear the thought of how freedom was being curtailed in the USSR. They are still much troubled by it today, while swallowing any number of camels in the shape of reactionary dictators as easily as they used to swallow the Indian princes.

Desires and Deeds

Above all, India fostered in the Labour Party the habit of mistaking pious aspiration for fulfilment, promise for performance, fantasy for reality—of thinking a thing as good as done when it has only been talked about. The besetting temptation of Communism has been to keep theory and practice united by arbitrary shackles; Labour has avoided this by leaving theory and practice to go each its separate way, and has kept its ideals unsullied by treating them as abstractions laid up in heaven, too good for this world. With Bertie Wooster to think was to act; with the Labour Party very often to act was to think. I think therefore I am. . . . It was a philosophy India was well qualified to teach.

WORK

'If you didn't dream at work it would send you mad. The whole bench is like this, a galley of automations locked in dreams.' Without dreams a production-line worker is not 'in the swing of it', does less than his stint. It is not escapism, but part of the rhythm required by the machine process which invades even the innermost privacy. BS, 33, an AEU member, is a panel-beater on a line producing the tractors which a technician described in our last work article.

On the Line

We go in at seven-thirty. To get to our shop you go down a flight of stairs, and at the top of them someone has written HAPPY VALLEY. It is part of an enormous factory with a population of eight thousand. We start working on our line at about eight o'clock, after we have had drink of tea and a look at the papers.

There are nine benches down the line, a man standing at each. We make all the tractor parts in our shop. On our line we panel-beat the hoods, each man doing his part of the work and then manhandling on to the next man, and so on, until it gets to me. We do two hundred and sixty hoods a day, and it only takes me two minutes to do my bit of it, though I was timed for ten minutes by the time-study man. When there aren't enough hoods to make up our two hundred and sixty a day we 'borrow' from the next day—and then forget the next day that we have borrowed them.

The worst kind of foreman you can have is the one who has worked himself up from the bench, because he knows all the dodges, yet if it was a few years since he worked himself up there are a few up-to-date dodges he does not know. And anyway it's strange how soon he forgets them when he's no longer one of us. We work on our own time, a piece-work rate. When each man was timed on the job recently two or three got less money for each hood. That was when the trouble started. So to be fair among ourselves we ended up by all pooling the job, that no man would walk out with less money than another. This can

about by a sort of 'spontaneous agreement'—which is the only way I can describe it. It isn't an uncommon thing though, and I know it happens on other jobs whenever it is possible. We also get four shillings an hour bonus, and that added to our piecework.

Each man, wearing a leather apron provided by the firm, has got a sander, buffer, picking hammer, block, mallet, and what we call a spoon—a long steel heavy implement for smoothing out the dents. After the hoods have been spot-welded, and gas-welded, Ron, the first man on the bench, gets to work on it. His job is to clean the gas weld up.

Ron is True Blue, the only man on our line who votes Tory. He tells me he's never been so well off in his life as he is now. 'I've got a car and house,' he says, 'so what more do I want?' But Ron forgot to tell me (though I reminded him) that he's got them on the HP which means he hasn't got them yet at all. Everyone keeps telling us we are better off these days than we were in the nineteen-thirties. Of course we are not. It looks as though we are because everyone's got things on tick. Take all the things off us that we have on tick and we would be worse off than we were in the nineteen-thirties. The rich still get richer and the poor still stay poor. All this HP is a trick to make you think you are rich or well off. You own nothing. Not that you want to, but at the same time you are being told in a thousand ways that to own something is the only thing in life. I told all this to Ron, and he voted Labour at the last election. About time, I said.

The job that Ron does to the hood is called 'to nose where the grill fits'. On the second bench the hood is passed on to Harry. He gets out any damage from the front of the nose. Every two or three weeks we have a blow-up with the foreman. Harry is the agitator on the line, but he is always missing when the trouble really starts. He was telling me the other day: 'It's silly working hard because the harder we work the more profits the shareholders get. The bastards have never done a day's work in their lives, and it would break their arm just to clock in.'

'That goes for most people,' I tell him. But we also have a shop steward on our line, and we make a practice of sending him into the office once a week over some matter, even if it's trivial, just to let them know we are still around. Last time it was because the hoods were too greasy, and hard to manhandle because of their weight and bulk. We got that sorted out.

Dave gets the hood next. He panel-beats all the left-hand side. There are a lot of score marks and damage on the sides. We are all about 35 years old on our line, except Dave, who is 45. He was in the last war, and told me that the only thing good about it was going to bed with other women—otherwise wars are no good because it is the same old tale about the rich getting richer by them, and the poor either getting killed or staying as poor as they ever were.

In every factory there is some kind of war between the staff and the workers. The staff always look down on them, as though we are dirt, yet if it weren't for us there wouldn't be any staff. I know a man who

looks down on the workers, and his father drudges in the factory cleaning the toilets.

We wear a mask around our mouths all day, because there is so much metal-dust flying about, spinning in clouds from the sanders and buffers. The mask stops a certain amount of dust from getting into your mouth, but not all. Smoking is a help on this job. It helps you to breathe a bit easier. None of us can believe smoking gives you cancer, but imagine that, if anything, cancer is caused by the monotony of the work. On our job the atmosphere is so foul that smoking is beneficial in that it stops you getting bronchitis or even something worse. Everyone on our job has been intending to leave for the last ten years but no one has left yet. They just keep on saying that they are waiting for something better to come along. We were talking about income tax the other week during tea break and Dave said: 'I wish they'd take the entertainment tax off french letters!'

So there are nine men all told who work on our line, and each one is a character, an individual in his own right. My work comes to me in a completely automatic way, in the gestures of an automaton. With a rag wrapped round my eyes I could still do it, and could do dozens before I realised that I had done any at all. But underneath this my mind never stops working. It lives by itself. Some call it dreaming, and if so, I am dreaming all day long, five days a week.

The whole bench dreams like this. It is a galley of automatons locked in dreams. Someone who has something to say to you has to come right up to your ear and scream into it before you can wake up or answer. If you aren't working—or dreaming—in this way, you say you aren't in the swing of it, and you do less of your stint.

I dream I am a painter painting great big pictures full of vivid outlandish colours. One day last week I found myself dreaming I was gravedigger, my mind turning up soil and roots while my body was panel-beating a hood. Some days I am a hired assassin, or settling problems in some clockwork and dreamlike revolution. Or I am writing a book about the dreams I am dreaming, or about factory thoughts running through my head if I am neither doing one thing nor the other.

Now and again a man will break from his particular dream or rhythm and come along the line with some lark or other. Dave with a pen and pad came and asked us all for five bob each because he was expecting another batch of dirty photos from he wouldn't say where, advising us to be the first in the line as we were his closest friends, before the staff and rest of the factory latched on and either jumped the queue or mobbed him.

Then there is Tom who is a real army type at the TA. He wears a coat and tie to work and has creases in his overalls, bulls up his boots every morning before coming in. Now and again he'll break out of his dress and stick a smile of confidence right across his face, and come up the line and ask each of us to join the TA with him that night. We all tell him what

do and, still with the smile on his well-shaven face, he marches back to his job and sets to again.

The job we do actually starts in the press shop—where the complete hood of steel is shaped on a press. The steel is fresh from Wales. This press does what we call 'blanks' it to size, moulds it into the more or less correct shape, and ten pressing operations are necessary before it comes to us looking like a tractor hood. The presses work in a line as well, each man completing one of the ten operations. By the time we get them most are damaged in some way, and we have to see that all the dents and blemishes are out, to make it as perfect as possible. I work on the top of the hood.

If you didn't dream at work it would send you mad. It isn't the actual work that kills you in a factory. It's the *repetition*. There is Gordon on our line, and I imagine he would like to be a surgeon, the way he handles his tools, as if he is performing some great and complicated operation on a famous general in the middle of a battlefield. He is a Scotsman, and some months ago he gave me a book of Robert Burns' poetry to read. Most of the stuff was in dialect and I couldn't make much of it, but I said it was all right when I handed it back. 'Are you sure?' he wanted to know, 'are you sure?' 'Of course I am,' I told him. I went to his house and he has got lots of books by Burns. There's a plaque of Burns on the wall above the dresser, and a framed picture of the house he was born in on the wall above the shelf. He's mad on Burns and reads him all the time. He was talking the other day about money, and said that any man with over a thousand pounds in the bank must have robbed the working class to get it, because no working man can ever save that much. Gordon does a bit of painting and decorating to help him to relax, and to make a bit of extra money for his wife and kids.

Our jobs are classified as 'semi-skilled' even though it takes a good six months before you can do it well. But if they called it 'skilled' they would have to pay us more money. In my spare time out of the factory I spend evenings over a book. I don't do too much reading, but when I do it's mostly politics or history, books which I pick out of the public library. Now and again I go fishing. Or I mend my car. I also go down to the pub and talk with the blokes. I'm a member of the Labour Party, but I don't see much of them except at election times. I've got a wife and child, and live in a council flat.

I don't think anyone here is doing the sort of job he would like to. Most of the men who work here come from small country towns or villages, and were born in country surroundings, and their other desires vary, so that Howard on my right would like to be a game-keeper. In his spare time though he makes a hobby of outwitting game-keepers and the police—by doing a bit of poaching. He's off every Sunday morning with his dog, and when I go out with him fishing he always takes his gun. Off he'll go, while I'm watching the floats, and then he'll come back in about half an hour with a couple of dead rabbits under his coat, which will make Monday dinner for both of us.

Jack on my left has unexplained ambitions to be a pop singer, even

though it might be a bit late at 35. I was trying to pump some good stuff into him about the last General Election, and then asked him who he'd vote for. He said he had never voted yet and never was going to. No matter who gets in, he said, we've got to work our balls off for someone to get rich. He's pop record mad and couldn't tell you anything about politics, though he could tell you in one second what the first top ten records were in last month's hit parade. However, we on the line have talked Jack around, and he'll be voting Labour from now on.

When I asked the lads on our line why they voted Labour three of them said the same thing. 'Because their dads had done so.' Their dads used to tell them about the bad old days and being on the dole. All their fathers worked down the pit.

Arthur said he voted Labour because he thinks his kids will get a better education under the Labour Government. 'That's more than I had when I was a kid. I was kicked out to work when I was 14 years old. My dad couldn't afford to buy me an education, not like them straw-hatted young gets at Eton.'

All the workers I talk to say they vote Labour, and we can't understand why the Tories always manage to scrape in in our constituency. (They didn't though, this time. We got them out.) Maybe some of them in our firm are two-faced.

I had a friend once called Bob who was a viewer on a line on the other side of the shop. One morning he dropped dead, and within two minutes there was another man on his bench and the body had vanished. Bob had a good face, mild and intelligent, yet all that day I couldn't bring his face back to mind. Instead, the face I saw was that of a Jewish woman who was pregnant and being marched off to the gas chamber and a big brute of a Nazi with a tommy gun pointing at her. I can't remember where I saw this picture, and I don't know why Bob came into it the way he did.

At tea break we talk, or one or two sit on their own and read news papers. Sometimes we talk about how much money the government is wasting, or about the new Labour M.P. for our division. He is a university man with letters after his name, and we all know that that will count a lot in his favour among the ignorant who normally might not think twice about voting Tory. The news about these 'noose trials' before the last election just got one big horselaugh from us. We knew it's all exaggerated, and a bit of a joke. We usually expect something like that before an election. Of course, if there's a strike called as some blokes don't come out, we get a bit het up and rough at the meetings. You'll always get a few of us shouting 'Get the bleeders' 'String 'em up'. It's all in the factory tradition, but it never comes anything. At least I don't know of it. People always get over-excited at a strike. When this noose trial stuff was in all the papers some of them hung a great big piece of rope looped into a noose over the entrance of our shop, and had everyone doubled up in fits as they came in. One of the foremen went blue in the face and had it ripped down, before one of the bosses walked through and saw it. We are unanimous in damni-

anyone in the political world who mentions making strikes (official or unofficial) illegal.

A lot of coloured men are employed in this factory. Sometimes when we are stalled and waiting for work we have to go in the press shop and give them a hand. I worked on a press in this way once, and there were four of us, a Pole, a West Indian, an Indian, and me. It was one of the most interesting days I've ever had at work. Nobody in our shop has a word to say against coloured people, and if anybody new comes in who has, then a gang of us soon talk him out of it. Whenever there's a strike or stoppage called the coloured blokes are out even before we are—if that's possible—so nobody can say anything against them on that score either.

One week I had to go on nights all week because our job slackened off. So I went into the paint shop, hanging tractor parts on an overhead rail so that they would then be carried on to the sprayers. They put me on with a Pakistani, and he was a very religious man. I told him I didn't believe in that sort of thing, so he tried to convert me into a Muslim. I wouldn't have it, until he talked about Muslims having four wives. Then it started to get interesting. I told him I couldn't manage four, that I might not be strong enough. But, he told me, in Pakistan they drink plenty of buffalo milk that gets their backs up before they go to bed. Well, I thought to myself, if you see any one breaking in to London Zoo one night holding a gallon jug you'll know it's me turned Muslim.

Two years ago they put an Italian to work with us. I was on the Sunbeam Alpine then. The Italian was a communist, and he started to teach me Italian during tea breaks. We got on well together, until he took ill one day with gut trouble. He was off for eighteen months, but now he's back, working on the lines opposite us—doing larger tractor hoods for export. We greet each other in Italian every time we meet.

On our line each man, as I've said, has a different price for his job. I get threepence more than the man behind me, for example. It all depends on how clever you are at pulling the wool over the time-study man. The more you do him down, the more the group benefits as a whole. There's always a rumpus though when the time-study man comes. We always know when he's on his way because somebody in the next shop will come over and tell the first man in our shop when he sees him. At that moment we start to rehearse the speed which we want him to see as our normal one. In other words we slow down. He comes up to me finally, because I'm the last one on the bench, and he puts his stop-watch down to look at me, and so that I can see the second hand go round from the corner of my eye. He didn't used to do this, but once I thought he'd stopped his watch before putting it down, and accused him of it, so now he sets it close for me to see. Anyway, he then makes you an offer for the job. You either accept it, or you don't. You haggle. If he offers you less than your rehearsal price and time, you fetch the shop steward. Eventually the three of you sort it out.

The trouble about work, and about this job in particular, is that you

never know how much money you are going to earn from one week to another because though we may go mad on the line for a month we then may spend two months almost at a complete stop. If it was just production they wanted there'd be no limit to what we could do. Winter is always a slack time, when we are hanging around a lot.

When we are on piece-work we make 18 pounds a week, from which they take two pounds income tax, 15 bob for insurance, and seven bob pension. If I'm not on piece-work my flat rate of pay is 11 pounds a week, without stoppages. So the newspaper articles make us laugh when they tell about car workers getting 50 pounds a week. And they always forget to say what the flat rate of pay is, which you're liable to get for more weeks of the year than you like to think about.

The noise on our line is what drives you almost mad. You can never really get used to it, and I have been there ten years (and in another factory for ten years before that). It would drive you mad, if you let it. Imagine nine men beating hammers and mallets on steel. If there were some sort of rhythm to it, it wouldn't be so bad.

I remember when I was a small boy seeing a film with Gracie Fields in it. She was singing with a crowd of people, marching into a factory and everyone waving union jacks—to get work. I thought it was good at the time, but I've come to realise since that it should have been the workers marching *out* with Red Flags. A man isn't just born to be a worker, like the bees, and nothing else. I'm sure every man can do something good for his life, apart from just slave all the time. You might not think so though if you listen to people who have never put their heads inside a factory gate.

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The State of the A.E.U.

Ken Coates

Last October the Amalgamated Engineering Union counted 1,146,865 members. This is a powerful total: even if the Transport and General Workers' Union is bigger, it probably does not include quite so many members working in the growth sectors of the economy, and it almost certainly does not embrace so many vociferous, aggressive and politically aware militants. Yet the T & GWU has been led from the left, and is systematically ranged against the Government's major commitments in social and economic policy; while the AEU has been the apparently entailed property of an extreme rightist caucus, directed by Sir William Carron and (more recently) Jim Conway. They have been somewhat uncouthly abetted by such assistants as John Boyd ('an amiable right-winger lacking in demagogic sex-appeal' as the *Economist* described him) who achieved a remarkable reputation as the self-appointed hammer of the white-collar workers at last year's TUC.

Respect for the niceties of the democratic process is not the most obvious characteristic of the Carron machine. A tight and privy faction of irredentist anti-socialists carefully watches all the numerous elections at every level of the union's apparatus, and not only fields its own meticulously screened candidates, but, seemingly, operates, through an extended grapevine of permanent officials, a formidable lobby against the Left. This January the independent left-wing journal *Voice of the Unions* featured a facsimile of part of a clandestine appeal which involved 14 full-time officers of the union, in a conspiracy not only to influence the elections, but also to build up a network of factory and local agents under the direct control of a national secretary who appears himself to be a professional employee of the union. Of course, the development of blocs and policy groupings is part of the normal life of democratic organizations and ought to be generally recognized as such. The question involved in this episode is, why should a dominant caucus choose to associate in secret? Why do they not simply announce their aims, group their forces, and prepare for an

open and rational debate of the central issues which divide the union. No-one could outlaw them, and, judging by the sophistication and tolerance of the major left-wing spokesmen in the union, no-one would wish to do so.

In the middle of last year, by contrast, a representative cross-section of the left-wing in the union foregathered, openly, in public, at a conference organized by *Engineering Voice* in Birmingham. This might have encouraged the secretive cabal to declare itself, to begin an open campaign. In this way union democracy would have taken a giant step forward. Not a bit of it. Instead, the front page of the AEU Journal, last July, was given over to a rabid outburst from Sir William. 'Members—Be Vigilant!' ran its headline. There followed an urgent plea written in Sir William's own rather staccato if convoluted jargon: 'officers and members of the Union present at the meeting were not only prepared to subscribe to the erection of a kind of organization within our Union, but that persons outwith our Union should be participants,' he charged. 'Members would be particularly disturbed' he went on, 'at the threat posed to the Union by those who take directions from sources made clear by their ideology'. 'I conclude', he concluded, 'by the exhortations to the membership to be vigilant, to reject these attempts to negate our Union's democracy and to resist the undoubted attempt to bring the Union under the kind of dominance which enslaved the ENU for so long.'

So much for democratic pluralism: a public meeting is denounced as 'plot', whilst a genuine cabal of intriguers goes unchallenged and even unacknowledged. Of course, Sir William's bouts of temperament are well known. Many of his more active shop stewards recall rather wryly the occasion upon which he endearingly described them as 'werewolves'. But in this case, his exhortations are specious to an extreme degree. For instance, to speak of the dominance which enslaved the ENU 'for so long' is either completely untrue, or a gross reflection on the probity of the present rather conformist leadership: that union: the communists in the ENU won their positions in open democratic contests, and their long rule was maintained, as far as anyone is aware, by the same means. The charges of ballot-rigging were only brought against the union's leadership after the serious split in the Communist Party caucus in the union, which took place after the events of 1956. There is no evidence at all that improper practices were employed at any time before that date: and if Sir William implies that they were, then he is charging them to the account not only of the convicted and now displaced leadership, but also to that of the principal plaintiffs in the ENU case, who are, in the main, now among the Union's present leadership, and would, if Sir William's implications were taken seriously, be assumed to have been themselves former conspirators. In reality, of course, Mr Les Cannon never rigged a ballot during the whole time he was in the Communist Party, and nor have the overwhelming majority of all those numerous communists who have ever held the important office in the trade union movement. The ENU scandal was a totally unique, exceptional and idiosyncratic affair, and can no more be held typical of communists in general than can Sir William's own intolerance be held at the door of all Roman Catholics.

However, the right of publicity, or rational discussion between open contenders, is only one of the many canons of democracy which are not valued highly by the Carron apparatus. For a precise view of the manner in which Sir William interprets that democracy in defence of which he enjoins such vigilance, it is necessary to study carefully the behaviour of the AEU delegations at the TUC and at the Labour Party Conference last year.

In 1965 the governing body of the AEU, its National Committee carried a fervid motion pledging 100 per cent support for the Labour Government. What exactly constituted 100 per cent was not defined, but this difficulty did not embarrass Sir William. From now on, the AEU vote was forever to be stacked behind the Government, warts and all, whatever it did. However, the same National Committee, if its wishes were scrupulously examined, would seem to have had some shrewder reservations. During the debate on its motion of support, it very plainly established that its commitment was understood to rest 'on the basis of the Government dealing similarly with *all* prices and incomes, to raise the living standards of our members'. At the 1966 National Committee this cavil was refined still further, in a motion requesting 'The Labour Government to carry out their election pledges' . . . and . . . 'to make it abundantly clear to the executive council of the Labour Party (sic) that, as an industrial movement, our support is to a socialist government'.

That is not all. The 1966 meeting also quite specifically mandated its executive to 'oppose anti-trade union legislation and interference with the collective bargaining process or the right to strike'. With even greater specificity, the National Committee, taking stock of this threat, adopted the now celebrated resolution 16, which read: 'In the event of any Bill being placed before Members of Parliament that will alter the *status quo*, the National Committee should be recalled.' True, the speaker who introduced this motion concentrated upon threats against trade unionism by more conventional antagonists than the Labour Government, as Sir William has since zealously insisted. But there is no ambiguity in the wording: and it is quite clear that the decision of the Government to amend the Prices and Incomes Bill as it did, and the decision of Mr Stewart to implement Part IV of the resultant Act, were whatever else one may think of them, manifest disturbances of the *status quo*. Far from carrying out its election pledges, the Government had betrayed its fundamental promise to 'end stop-go-stop', instituted measures to seriously increase unemployment, imposed serious curbs on the unions, abrogated collective bargaining at least for a season, and lifted a heavy fist over the right to strike. Sir William remained undeterred. At the TUC, on every contentious issue, whatever his members had said about their opinions, he poured their votes into the Government trough. His delegation at Congress, a directly elected grouping with clearly defined responsibilities under the Union's constitution, was told that its opinions were irrelevant on the delicate question of voting, since '100 per cent equals 100 per cent'. In the Party Conference 100 per cent was still no less. The Union's members of Parliament, who are constitutionally entitled to be present at meetings of their Conference delegation, were informed by their president

that they should speak when they were spoken to. Drusquely Sir William put aside all complaints from the delegates that the union had, in fact, gone on record against the American intervention in Vietnam, and in favour of cuts in military expenditure. From the moment that the Conference opened, he kept firm control of the pad upon which the votes of the delegation are recorded, and remorselessly plonked the AEU's 768,000 votes (the figure at which the Union is affiliated to the Party) straight down the line for the platform.

During the elections for the Party's National Executive Committee, this '100 per cent loyalty' went so far as to enable him to withhold support from a candidate to whom the delegation had explicitly committed it. A. J. Forrester, the nominee of DATA, the Draughtsmens' organization, and a highly competent, radical candidate with special qualifications to appeal to the engineers' vote, had, in fact, been chosen by the AEU delegation meeting on the Saturday prior to the Conference, and, as Hugh Scanlon told the *Guardian* after the event, 'I reminded the President that the voting was queried by me' at that meeting . . . 'and the recount confirmed our support for Mr Forrester'. Forrester was not elected. 768,000 votes of his went missing, but despite shouts of complaint in the corridors of the Conference and in the newspapers, Sir William had no comment to make 'on domestic matters' within the Union.

On the Thursday of Conference, however, the worm turned. Sir William is a director, among other enterprises (including the Bank of England), of Fairfields, and on that day he had to go off to a board meeting. While he was employed in this work, the union's votes rove off, twice, and decisively against the platform. A call for a contraction in military expenditure in Germany and a decisive reduction in the burden East of Suez, and a demand that 'all pressures' be brought on the United States Government 'to end the war in Vietnam', were both carried with AEU support. How did this come about? In the words of *Voice of the Unions*: 'In the absence of the President, leadership of the delegation passed to its most senior member, Hugh Scanlon. When the time came to cast the union's vote the General Secretary passed Sir Scanlon the "pad" on which is set out the text of the resolution with spaces marked "for" and "against" to record the wishes of the delegation . . . Scanlon immediately passed it round the delegation, which could hardly believe their eyes. When it came back, every signatory supported the progressive motion. Scanlon then cast the vote in accordance with the delegation's wishes.'

Sounds of anguish echoed down from Scotland when Sir William heard these results.

Yet worse things were in store. Three branches of the Union, at Chisford, Manchester (20) and Miles Platting, had submitted appeals against his earlier decision to disenfranchise the TUC delegation, preventing them from deciding, in accordance with rule, how votes would be cast. Two of them specifically complained about the failure to act upon resolution 16, recalling the National Committee, after the introduction of Part IV of the Prices and Incomes Act. A fourth, separate, objection from the Sheffield district, had already been submitted before

meeting of the ruc, while the bill was passing into law, and limited itself to an appeal for action upon resolution 16. The Executive of the Union, balanced in favour of the Carron wing, rejected all such demands, and the objections were then referred to the Union's Final Appeal Court, which met in Dublin between October 17th and November 3rd. Unlike the majority of the executive, this body showed its mettle. It could not be steam-rollered. When it reached this series of appeals, it began by ruling in favour of the one on the sole issue of resolution 16. This in itself was a decision of explosive significance, because it convicted the President, and by complicity, the executive of severe dereliction of duty, and clearly implied that there had been a breach of faith with the membership. The Court then laboured on through all three appeals against the usurpation of the voting rights of the ruc delegation, and decided, one after the other, in their favour. Resolution 16 was found to have been wrongly shelved by seven votes to three, and two of the other appeals were sustained by the same vote. The third was upheld by eight to three. As if to underline the meaning of its deliberations, the Court concluded by adopting a strongly worded closing resolution, reprimanding the executive for failing to implement two of its decisions from the previous year, and emphasizing that this failure contravened the Court's binding decision within Union rules.

The executive gathered again, in December, to pick the bones out of this dish. Its consideration of the Court's findings was, in the event, to produce a predictable if totally arbitrary result. It decided to reject them. Not altogether inappropriately, *Voice of the Unions* headlined this news 'Carron declares udr'. Certainly Sir William's defence of the constitution in his July 'exposures' begins to appear extremely strained in the light of such a decision. Appeals for vigilance to uphold the Union rules now cut away at very different roots from those at which the president was hacking at that time.

The seriousness of this complete moral reverse cannot be easily over-estimated. This year sees a number of crucial elections in the Union. The pattern of local elections, and of contests for vacancies on the executive, seems to be indicating a move to the Left. Not only does Sir William himself retire, but the General Secretary and one of the Assistant Secretaries also face contests, for which they can at present have very little stomach. For a year now the Union's press has been geared up to rescue what can be saved of somewhat tired reputations: *Voice of the Unions* published a table setting out the coverage which has been allocated to the doings and personalities of the major rightwing contenders, Conway, Carron, and the heir-apparent, Boyd, in the past 12 monthly issues of the AEU Journal.

| | <i>Number of photos</i> | <i>Number of plugs</i> | <i>Column inches of text</i> |
|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Conway | 45 | 40 | 590 |
| Carron | 25 | 30 | 250 |
| Boyd | 6 | 20 | 100 |

The main socialist contenders for office, Ernie Roberts and Hugh

Scanlon, have received negligible treatment. At the same time, the Journal has devoted 1,025 column inches to articles written from within the establishment viewpoint, as against 85 column inches expressing the oppositional case.

All this has to be evaluated in the context of an overall press campaign, using the national mass media, and orchestrated with fair skill, in which the evident shortcomings of Boyd are seen to weigh rather lighter in the scales than the danger—from the point of view of the controllers of the national press—of a socialist inheriting the leadership of so key an organization. Boyd's clumsy and philistine approach to affairs, in which members of NALGO can be pictured as the class enemy, while bankers (like his friend and mentor, Sir William himself) are seen as protectors and patrons, would not normally make him a favourite with either the liberal press or for that matter the Labour Party hierarchy, who do not mind suffering fools quite cheerfully but prefer that they should know when to remain silent. Alas, needs must when the devil drives. If Hugh Scanlon, the favourite Left Candidate (who is being opposed on his left flank by Reg Birch, who has recently been suspended from membership of the Communist Party after defending the Chinese viewpoint) were to succeed in defeating Boyd, as appears extremely likely, then the centre of gravity of trade union politics as a whole would move sharply towards the Left. If the AEU were simply to speak out to record the reservations and hesitations of the majority of its members, and to defend their interests as they see them now, it would be compelled to move sharply into opposition, jeopardizing in the process all the Government's main commitments in industrial relations policy. Such a move would not merely reinforce the position which has been honourably sustained by the T & GWU and the technicians' unions, but would also seriously undermine the increasingly tenuous security of a number of other orthodox union oligarchs, who are uncertainly considering a host of problems which have been becoming more and more obvious since first they tethered their reluctant organizations to Mr Gunter's chariot.

The main difficulty which inhibits predictions about the outcome of such elections is that they normally only involve something like a tenth of the membership: clearly the rate of abstention, the degree of cynical withdrawal, can be a determining factor. But it is easy to see why the old guard in the AEU are worried: and socialists have ever reason to hope that before long their worry will extend, deepened by serious gain for the left, beyond the governing cabal of the AEU into even more elevated councils of the Labour Movement.

Roberto Rossellini

Leo Russell

Rossellini's reputation has ebbed and flowed more perhaps than that of any other leading director. In part this has been because of the nexus between politics and film criticism in Italy, in part because of changes in fashion and taste, in part because of the personal scandals which have punctuated Rossellini's career. Nevertheless, looked back on now, from the near peak of his achievement, *The Seizure of Power by Louis XIV.* his work shows a remarkable consistency, thematically and stylistically. He has persevered on his own path; sporadically this has criss-crossed with the stampede of popular and critical taste.

Rossellini's themes are fundamentally Italian, indeed Southern Italian. The humus from which his themes spring is that of traditional Catholic (superstitious and semi-pagan) Southern Italy about to be sucked into the vortex of Northern Europe, with its entirely different kind of civilization, cultural and social. Thus we find at the centre of his work the antagonistic couplets North v. South, cynicism v. innocence, positivism v. spirituality, etc. His Bergman cycle, for instance, is dominated by the theme of the Northern woman coming south and undergoing a spiritual crisis, from which she emerges with a kind of religious faith. It would be misleading to call this faith Catholic: in many ways, with its emphasis on acceptance, it is Oriental (Buddhist or Hindu) and, of course, this becomes explicitly apparent in his film *India*. In terms of Christianity, Rossellini's vision of sainthood is close to the Dostoyevskian holy fool, to Simone Weil (whose influence Rossellini acknowledges) or to a kind of legendary Franciscanism, alluded to in several films, including of course his version of *The Little Flowers*.

This emphasis on naïve faith and acceptance naturally goes hand in hand with an unabashed populism: in *The Miracle* or *The Machine for Exterminating the Wicked* this takes the form of an extreme indulgence in Southern Italian superstition, to the point of centring films around 'miraculous', supernatural events, which Rossellini justifies as part and parcel of popular culture. In *Europa 51* there is a clear distinction drawn between the 'human' slum-dwellers and the 'inhuman' bourgeois and bureaucrats: priest and *Paris Sera* journalist occupy an uneasy middle position. Again, Rossellini's resistance films are populist in tone, with the same curious tensions between priest and Communist. This populism has led to political difficulties for Rossellini: he has often succeeded in disgruntling both the Communist Party and the Catholic Church. (In *Vanina Vanini*, for instance, Rossellini actually used both Marxists and priests as script-writers, so that the tension between

Catholic and *carbonaro* in the film was actually thrown back into the script-writing, with predictable results.) In fact, Rossellini is scarcely interested in politics, but he has a troubled consciousness (which would now be called Johannine) of the overlap of church and party in much popular (peasant and *petit bourgeois*) culture, which is uneasily reflected in his films.

The counterpart of Rossellini's populism is an intense patriotism and also a concern with heroism: not as a psychological, so much as a socio-political category. His patriotism is the natural result of his confidence in Italy and expresses itself in his constant return to first the Resistance, then the *Risorgimento*. (Rossellini's retreat backwards into history, following that eastwards to India, springs from his disenchantment with the cynicism of modern Europe: a search for the pure well of life, in fact.) In *Viva l'Italia* it is clearly linked with the theme of heroism: Garibaldi is the popular hero (in the same way that St. Francis is the popular saint). The two films have the same oleographic quality. Rossellini's approach is to bathe Garibaldi in a charismatic aura, while at the same time stressing his 'human' weaknesses and foibles, such as his gout. With this kind of concept of the hero, it is not hard to make the transition from Garibaldi to Louis XIV.

I have sketched Rossellini's themes first because it is important to point out that his work has this thematic consistency, in view of the rhetoric about 'realism' with which critics have always surrounded his films. It is easy to see what 'realism' means when applied to Rossellini: it means the absence, to an unusual degree, of professional actors, stage sets, make-up, a pre-arranged shooting script, etc. It means a grainy, rather rough-and-ready look, reminiscent of newsreels, far from Hollywood 'quality'. But this is a question of method and style: it in no way means any greater quotient of truth or reality as regards the thematic content of the film. This is not to say that form and content are unrelated: the ideology of 'acceptance' and 'patience' which relates to Rossellini's views of sainthood, also relates to his methods of work, to the concept of the camera which records (accepts the given, eliminating directorial intervention) and follows (patiently waiting the moment of revelation). Similarly his episodic method of construction (*Paisa*, *The Little Flowers*, *India*, etc) springs from a dislike of 'artificial' plots, which parallels his dislike of the 'artificiality' of modern European society.

In some ways, Rossellini's 'realism' is a correct, more honest concept than others: the natural concomitant of the non-intervention of the director is the non-intervention politically of man in the natural course of history (or, as in *India*, in the natural cycle of life and death). The left-wing ideology of 'realism' has great difficulty in overcoming the inconsistency of an approach that both stays at the level of the phenomenal forms and also demands the revelation of an esoteric (essential meaning: the traditional marxist attack (derived from Taine and Belinsky) adumbrates a theory of types, as distinct from contingent phenomena, but this has obvious drawbacks: it easily falls into schematism or even sentimental idealization.

Rossellini's impact has been considerable; he has represented th

opposite pole to, say, the American musical (the Lumière tradition against Méliès). He has reminded directors that there is a scale of possibilities of ~~mise-en-scène~~, at one end of which he stands. He has thus contributed enormously to the development of contemporary cinema: we can see his influence on Godard, for instance, in his use of episodic construction (*Vivre Sa Vie*), his deliberately non-quality photograph (*Les Carabiniers*), his portrait of Karina (echoing Rossellini's portrait of Bergman). In this sense, Rossellini is an historic director. He is also consistent author, who has persevered in developing his personal themes and style in adverse circumstances. He also has obvious limitations, as this article will have suggested, if only cursorily: these are clearly related to the uncritical character of his realism. For despite the vaunted objectivity of the lens, the world reveals itself to Rossellini much as he had subjectively envisaged it.

E.S.P. music

Alan Becker

Largely because of the success of The Fugs (Ed Sanders' and Tuli Kupferberg's beat group, to be discussed in my forthcoming essay on popular music), the E.S.P. label continues to exist, and has grown in size and substance. The faults we noted previously are still sometimes apparent—there are still no sleeve notes, and the recording quality is sometimes less than superlative—but, unlike any other label, it continues to represent contemporary developments in jazz without compromise or apology. Bernard Stollman is to be congratulated on his achievement.

In this article, we want to consider some music from the E.S.P. catalogue. Most of the musicians involved have never appeared on record before. It would be premature to attempt to gather up their work and present it as a general trend, so we intend to review each record separately.

The general principles from which all this music arises. All the musicians reviewed below work in directions that were first suggested by Ornette Coleman, and the basic principles have been considered in the preceding discussion of the new wave (*New Left Review* 31, 32, 34 & 35). This does not mean that it is all immediately and easily comprehensible: some of it is still very puzzling. Initially, the listener should try to suspend his musical conditioning and just let the music happen.

The Byron Allen Trio

E.S.P. Disk 100

Byron Allen, alto saxophone; Ted Robinson, bass; Maceo Gilchrist, drums.

Time Is Past: Three Steps In The Right Direction: Decision For The Col Man: Today's Blues Tomorrow.

In each piece, there are changes of tempo and dynamic level, and movements between trio, duet and solo playing; the trio passages involve the interaction of three separate lines, recalling Ornette Cole-

man's small groups, the Sonny Rollins Village Vanguard trio, and the trio recordings Thelonious Monk made for the Prestige label. All changes of direction seem to succeed each other naturally. In general, the musicians are very responsive to each others' suggestions though Robinson occasionally tries to impose bebop time. In one sense, therefore, this music is freer than earlier jazz. Though this is essentially collective improvisation, Allen's personality dominates throughout. He is a very assured improviser and very inventive melodically. His sound is hard and tightly organized, even when he admits harmonics and other 'noises' or uses contrasts between the qualities of high and low registers.

This music *should* encompass a wide variety of moods; in fact, it does not. Throughout, it seems to be a matter of earnest, vigorous muscular activity, very graceful but lacking any significant emotional involvement. There are no external controls provided by chord patterns, metre or any other repeated form, but it seems that the musicians have internalized control, so that they can perform together 'freely'—Allen has emphasized that he does not rehearse his group—with the implicit assurance that nothing untoward will happen. There are no errors here, but, on the other hand, nothing is discovered. The trio does not reach the miraculous high point of free music, at which something arises out of nothing. Despite all this, Allen is obviously a very talented musician. When he can express himself more fully and function in a more permissive environment, he will make a very important contribution.

The Giuseppe Logan Quartet

E.S.P. Disk 1007

Giuseppe Logan, alto and tenor saxophones, oboe: Don Pullen, piano: Eddie Gomez, bass: Milford Graves, drums.

Tabla Suite: Dance Of Satan: Dialogues: Tancoos: Blecker Partita.

Logan's own sounds are feeble and unattractive; his constructions are repetitive and pointless. His group, however, is very interesting. The basic approach seems to be a development of that used by John Coltrane's long-established aggregation, though there is none of the ponderous formality here, and no pre-determined position for any instrument. These musicians are not concerned with melodic and contrapuntal particularization, but with changing densities and textures of sound. Thus the ensembles are turbulent and boiling throughout incessant whirling hails of percussive fragments.

Don Pullen is the most interesting pianist to appear since Cecil Taylor. He adopts the latter's total approach to the instrument, playing both the keys and the strings, and he seems to take this approach to one possible conclusion, so that his work is less figured than Taylor's more abstract, perhaps even more torrential. Milford Graves, one of the two most important new percussionists, is continually active without restricting himself to keeping time or to any other form of comment. Perhaps more clearly than any other record under review, this shows how the separation of 'rhythm section' and 'front line' has been overcome in the new music.

This is a very exciting record, but I am still rather puzzled by it. I find difficult to evaluate, because I am not yet sufficiently familiar with the musicians' own criteria. A second album by the quartet has appeared (E.S.P. DISK 1013).

Albert Ayler: Saints Rejoice

E.S.P. Disk 102

Albert Ayler, tenor saxophone: Donald Ayler, trumpet: Charles Tyler, alto saxophone: Henry Grimes, Gary Peacock, basses: Sunny Murray, drums; Call Cobbs Junior, harpsichord (on *Angels*).

Spirits Rejoice: Holy Family: D. C.: Angels: Propbet.

In the space available, one can only discuss the important general points raised by this very beautiful record. Together with *Bells* (E.S.P. DISK 1010) it introduces a second phase in Ayler's development. Here the main impact comes from *antithesis*—between the folk element (bugle-calls, marches, dances, drinking songs) and the short, frantic screaming noise solos and collective explosions (*Spirits Rejoice: D.C.*); between the parodied militarism of the horns and the shifting, shadow elusive basses and drums, between Ayler's leering, caricaturing solo and the harpsichord's serious romanticism on *Angels*. It is clear that, at present, Ayler is turning towards New Orleans for inspiration. Even during its most violent onslaughts, this group has an openness, radiance and a singing quality that one hears nowhere else in jazz except in the New Orleans marching bands. In part, this approach is response to the endless freedom and the threat of dissolution and chaos Ornette Coleman presented; here, there are stable elements set off against limitless space. In part, it is a reaction against the exclusive climate that has pervaded jazz since the bebop revolution and is now degenerating into a pseudo-connoisseurship of thoroughly rehearsed and completely predictable elements. Ayler wants to 'purify' the tradition by making it available to everyone once more. This music transcends all the jazz critic's categories, and goes beyond the antithesis of good and bad taste.

Propbet shows another important facet of Ayler's music and of the present general trend. It is very beautiful, one of the finest show pieces ever, because it has the natural rise and fall of somatic processes. It demonstrates that the essence of swinging is making music with the human body as its measure. Thus, some critics have termed the new jazz 'energy music'.

New York Eye And Ear Control

E.S.P. disk 101

Albert Ayler, Peacock, Murray: Donald Cherry, trumpet: Roswell Rudd, trombone: John Tchicai, alto saxophone.

Dawn's Dawn: AY: TTT.

This is music for Michael Snow's film of the same name. It is part of Ayler's earlier, more abstract phase; recalling Coleman's *Free Jazz* and Ayler's own *Spiritual Unity*, it is continuous, athenatic improvising, i

which each of the horns leads the ensemble in turn. Ayler sets out all the moods of his art and his instrumental style—a whole range of saxophone effects which has not been previously explored—at greater length than he has done more recently and though the other participants, particularly Cherry and Tchichai, are very good, he looms above everyone, naturally, without insensitivity or bombast. This record gives further proof of his present pre-eminence, should this be needed.

The music moves more slowly than *Spirits Rejoice*; one could even say it was sluggish in comparison. It is more homogeneous, it remains within contemporary jazz and does not lead to a higher level of discourse. However, it is still very good to listen to, particularly because of the rich, churning tone colours, reminiscent of Ellington's and Cecil Taylor's metropolitan music. Such sounds seem to express something enduring and 'objective' about New York, though they become less sentimental and more ominous at each recurrence.

Sunny Murray

E.S.P. disk 1032

Jacques Courcil, trumpet: Jack Graham, Byard Lancaster, alto saxophones: Al Silva, bass: Sunny Murray, drums.

Phase 1234: Hilariously: Angels & Devils: Glibat.

Murray has worked in Ayler's band for a long time, and therefore it is not surprising that the spirit of Ayler and his colleagues permeates this music—the individual contributions, the group style and the compositions (three by Murray and *Angels & Devils* by Courcil, who, incidentally, comes from North Africa). One does not conclude, however, that these musicians are derivative and boring. Jazz has reached a point of development at which individual differences in style begin to appear arbitrary and unimportant, where narcissistic cutting contests no longer have any validity. I contend that this does not impair the central endeavour of the music. This is a very exciting album because it seems to express all the power and drive of the best moments in the bebop tradition, purified, divested of unnecessary and inhibiting structural elements.

This is 'energy music', continually changing, accelerating and decelerating, raging or dropping towards quiescence without any reference to external guidelines. All the participants are confident and forceful. Murray has never been better recorded, both in his moments of tremendous surging, which, as Max Harrison has pointed out, relate him to Art Blakey, and in his moments of extreme delicacy. Al Silva appears to be very much influenced by David Izenzon, and is particularly impressive when he uses a bow. Courcil is very much influenced by Donald Cherry, but he also uses vocal effects which were originally part of the Ellington tradition. Graham is rather overshadowed by Lancaster who makes his first appearance on record after a series of contentious notices in the American jazz press; he is the most interesting of the new musicians present, and the best of the younger alto saxophonists. His first influence may have been Eric Dolphy, for he seems to retain some of the latter's hard brilliance. Now, however, he models his playing on Ayler's, and his lines are like leaping flame.

The Moment of Cubism

I find it hard to believe that the most extreme Cubist works were painted over 50 years ago. It is true that I would not expect them to have been painted today. They are both too optimistic and too revolutionary for that. Perhaps in a way I am surprised that they have been painted at all. It would seem more likely that they were yet to be painted. Do I make things unnecessarily complicated? Would it not be more helpful to say simply: the few great Cubist works were painted between 1907 and 1914? And perhaps to qualify this by adding that a few more, by Juan Gris, were painted a little later? And anyway is it not nonsense to think of Cubism having not yet taken place when we are surrounded daily life by the apparent effects of Cubism? All modern design, architecture and town planning seems inconceivable without the initial example of Cubism.

nevertheless I must insist on the sensation I have in front of the works themselves: the sensation that the works and I, as I look at them, are caught, pinned down, in an enclave of time, waiting to be released and to continue a journey that began in 1907.

The sensation could reflect a desire to escape. The intervening years were and are mostly ones of horror. Yet they exist. They cannot be treated like a cloud that passes across the moon. And for all their horror, they must be counted years of progress. To dismiss them would be to retrogress. We will never again find ourselves in a position that is comparable to 1907 or 1911. The photographs of the men of that time show us strangers. Through them we can imagine how we shall appear 50 years hence.

Then why play with conceits about time in this way? Because the sensation which I insist upon may be a key to understanding the significance of Cubism.

Cubism was a style of painting which evolved very quickly and whose various stages can be fairly specifically defined. Yet there were also Cubist poets, Cubist sculptors, and later so-called Cubist architects. Certain original stylistic features of Cubism can be found in the pioneer works of other movements: Suprematism, Constructivism, Futurism, Vorticism, and, later, the de Stijl movement and Dadaism.

The question thus arises: can Cubism be adequately defined as a style? It seems unlikely. Nor can it be defined as a policy. There was never any Cubist manifesto. The opinions and outlook of Picasso, Braque, Léger, or Juan Gris were clearly very different even during the few years when their paintings had many features in common. Is it not enough that the category of Cubism includes those works that are now generally agreed to be within it? This is enough for dealers, collectors and cataloguers who go by the name of art historians. But it is not, I believe, enough for you or me.

Process and Originality

If the word revolution is used seriously and not merely as an epithet for this season's novelties, it implies a process. No revolution is simply the result of personal originality. The maximum that such originality can achieve is madness: madness is revolutionary freedom confined to the self.

Cubism cannot be explained in terms of the genius of its exponents. And this is emphasized by the fact that most of them became less profound artists when they ceased to be Cubists. Even Braque and Picasso never surpassed the works of their Cubist period: and a great deal of their later work was inferior.

Thus we are forced to consider the concurrence of circumstance. What brought about the Cubist revolution? What sustained its spirit?

The story of how Cubism happened in terms of painting and of th

leading protagonists has been told many times. The protagonists themselves found it extremely difficult—both at the time and afterwards—to explain the meaning of what they were doing.

To the Cubists, Cubism was spontaneous. To us it is part of history. But a curiously unfinished part. Cubism should be considered not as a stylistic category but as a moment (even if a moment lasting six or seven years) experienced by a certain number of people. A strangely placed moment.

It was a moment of future promise. It was the future to which the Cubists felt loyal and in their intimation of which they felt secure. With the possible exception of the Constructivists after 1917 in Moscow, the confidence of the Cubists has never since been equalled among artists.

What is the significance of this moment for us now?

The Modern Epoch

D. H. Kahnweiler, who was a friend of the Cubists and their dealer, has written:

'I lived those seven crucial years from 1907 to 1914, with my painter friends . . . what occurred at that time in the plastic arts will be understood only if one bears in mind that a new epoch was being born, in which man (all mankind in fact) was undergoing a transformation more radical than any other known within historical times.'

By 1910 almost all the basic ideas and developments which are now transforming the world were already in existence either as theories or as emerging forces.

Newtonian physics was already superseded. The concept of the field—perhaps the most fundamental of modern concepts—was now explicable through the Special Theory of Relativity. In 1910 Rutherford discovered the atomic nucleus.

By 1905 Freud had published the most important of his insights. Pavlov had published his first paper and was working on his theory of reflexes. Max Weber had published the founding book of modern sociology.

Nor were the changes only theoretical: many of them impinged more and more on daily lives: the increasing use of electricity and the telephone, the invention of radio, the beginnings of mass-production, the publishing of mass-circulation newspapers, the new structural possibilities offered by the availability of steel and aluminium, the rapid development of chemical industries and the production of synthetic materials, the appearance of the motor car and the aeroplane.

The ultimate significance of these changes is suggested by the most profound one of all. Between 1870 and 1905 capitalism changed its

character. By 1900 the era of monopoly was established—and monopoly capitalism constituted the most developed form of economic organization yet achieved. I mean structurally, not morally developed. It involved planning on an unprecedented, interlocking scale. For the first time it offered to certain interests the promise of being able to treat the world as a single unit.

Linked with this development had been a period of rapid colonial expansion. Between 1884 and 1900 the European powers added 11 million subjects to their empires and 10 million square miles. By 1900 there was none of the world left to claim. It was all owned.

The Unity of the World

The truth, then, to which everything was pointing was the unity of the world: a unity created by man, and beginning to be reflected in his consciousness. Few formulated it in such words. But this was the content of the excitement or awe provoked by such things as the remote control of electricity, the experience of talking over a telephone, the idea of men flying, the daily reading of world news, the speed of an assembly line, the prospect of an empire on which the sun never set, or the belief in the international solidarity of the working class.

I do not wish to suggest a period of ebullient optimism. It was a period of poverty, exploitation, fear and desperation. The majority could only be concerned with the means of their survival, and millions did not survive. But for those who asked questions, there were new positive answers whose authenticity seemed to be guaranteed by the existence of new forces.

The socialist movements in Europe (with the exception of the German) and large sections of the trade union movement in the United States were convinced that they were on the eve of revolution and that the revolution would spread to become a world revolution. This belief was shared even by those who disagreed about the political means necessary—by syndicalists, parliamentarians, communists and anarchists.

In 1904 during the Russo-Japanese war the Russian and Japanese delegates sat next to each other at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International and when they clasped each other's hands, all 450 delegates stood up to applaud, convinced that the united opposition of the international working classes could prevent any European war.

It is too easy to call such hopes naïve. Within 50 years a third of the world had become socialist. More recently in certain cases the pressure of popular opinion has checked wars. Men were deceived about the immediacy and simplicity of the new forces released, but they were not mistaken about their advent.

A particular kind of suffering was coming to an end: the suffering of hopelessness and defeat. People now believed, if not for themselves then for the future, in victory. The belief was often strongest where the

conditions were worse. Everyone who was exposed to such misery and who had the strength left to ask about the purpose of his miserable life was able to hear in answer the echo of declarations like that of Lucheni, the Italian anarchist who stabbed the Empress of Austria in 1898. 'The hour is not far distant when a new sun will shine upon a men alike', or like that of Kaliev in 1905 who, on being sentenced to death for the assassination of the Governor General of Moscow, told the Court 'to learn to look the advancing revolution straight in the eye

All Is Possible

An end was in sight. The limitless, which until now has always reminded men of the unattainability of their hopes, became suddenly an encouragement. The world became a starting point. The small circle of Cubist painters and writers were not directly involved in politics and were probably barely conscious of some of the developments I have mentioned. But they were keenly aware of a sense of promise everywhere.

'All is possible,' wrote André Salmon, the Cubist poet, 'everything is realizable everywhere and with everything.'

'We who are constantly fighting', wrote Apollinaire, 'along the frontiers of the infinite and the future.'

The 1914-18 War

With the 1914-18 war a new kind of suffering was born. The appeal of any call to arms is always a deception when compared with what happens on the battlefield. But this deception was of a new order. Men were forced to face for the first time the full horror—not of hell, of damnation, or a lost battle, or famine, or plague—but the full horror of what stood in the way of their own progress. And they were forced to face this in terms of themselves, not in terms of a simple confrontation

The scale of the waste and the irrationality and the degree to which they could be persuaded and forced to deny their own interests, led to the belief that there were incomprehensible and blind forces at work. But since these forces could not be accommodated by religion, and since there was no ritual by which they could be approached or appeased, each man had to live with them *within himself*, as best he could.

On the last page of *All Quiet on the Western Front* the hero thinks:

'I am very quiet. Let the months and years come, they can take nothing from me, they can take nothing more. I am so alone, and so without hope that I can confront them without fear. The life that has borne me through these years is still in my hands and my eyes. Whether I have subdued it, I know not. But so long as it is there it will seek its own way out, heedless of the will that is within me.'

The new kind of suffering which was born in 1914 and has persisted in Western Europe until the present day was an inverted suffering. Men

thought within themselves about the meaning of events, identity, hope. Religious faith, even if nominally accepted, was irrelevant. The meaning they sought had to relate to a possibility that could not be dismissed or forgotten because it was being constantly demanded by the new, existing means of production and communication and calculation — by what people came to call technology: the possibility of a unified world.

Political Conflict

The conflicts were basically political and were polarised by the Soviet Revolution of 1917. Yet at the same time the fundamental political conflict—the confrontation between those who needed the new revolutionary possibilities and those who had an interest in preserving the *status quo* with only slight modifications—became increasingly confused. It is after 1914 that false ideology—by which people are deceived about the issues confronting them and deceive themselves—becomes *the* critical factor. In so far as the social structure of Western Europe has not changed since 1914, it is due to this ideological factor.

Since this inversion of politics, the critical struggles have been waged within the mind. It is this which has created the new field of suffering. And it is this which fundamentally explains the subjective nature of most art since 1914.

We can now understand the central paradox of Cubism. The spirit of Cubism was objective. Hence its calm and its comparative anonymity as between artists. Hence also the accuracy of its prophecies. I live in a satellite city that has been built during the last five years. The character of the pattern of what I now see out of the window as I write can be traced directly back to the Cubist pictures of 1911 and 1912. Yet the Cubist spirit seems to us today to be curiously idealistic, curiously disengaged and apolitical.

The doubt is well expressed by Henri Lefebvre in his *Contribution à l'Esthétique*:

'Le cubisme a-t-il rendu sensible l'espace abstrait à trois dimensions géométriques, ou rendu abstrait le sensible? Posons la question. Si le cubisme a rendu abstrait le sensible, il se rattache à l'esthétique platonicienne, dans des conditions historiques (conditions de *classe*) qui ont amené une sorte d'hyper-intellectualisme dit "moderne". Mais peut-être le cubisme doit-il se caractériser par la coexistence et le conflit de ces deux aspects, de ces deux interprétations. Il aurait à la fois et d'une façon contradictoire (donc instable) intellectualisé le sensible et sensibilisé l'abstrait.'

The doubt arises because the Cubists took no account of politics *as we have since experienced them*. It is not that they were exceptionally apolitical as men of their time. It is that they, in common with their contemporaries, could not imagine and did not foresee the extent, depth and duration of the political difficulties which would arise in the struggle to realize what had so clearly become possible and what has since become imperative.

The World Transformed

The Cubists imagined the world transformed, but not the process of transformation.

It might be argued that their vision was Utopian, and happened to include a few accurate prophecies. What was the agent of the transformation they awaited? Who was to make the revolution they believed in? What was the class position and content of their work?

These are reasonable questions. Yet in front of a Cubist painting one cannot ask: What is its political content? What is its class content? and expect to get an answer within the same terms of reference as an answer given about Massaccio, Brueghel, Goya or Courbet.

Probably it is a mistake to talk of the 'Art of Cubism', as applied to the paintings produced in those seven years, for these paintings made a statement which transformed the function of painting and modified the meaning of Art to a degree which is still confusing us. It is for this reason that I prefer to think of the moment of Cubism, and of the paintings as evidence of what was understood and imagined in that moment.

Image and Reality

Cubism changed the nature of the relationship between the painted image and reality, and by so doing it expressed a new relationship between man and reality.

Many writers have pointed out that Cubism marked a break in the history of art comparable to that of the Renaissance in relation to medieval art. That is not to say that Cubism can be equated with the Renaissance. The confidence of the Renaissance lasted for about 60 years (approximately from 1420 to 1480): that of Cubism lasted for about six years. However, the Renaissance remains a point of departure for appreciating Cubism.

Imitation of Nature

In the early Renaissance the aim of art was to imitate nature. Albert formulated this view: "The function of the painter is to render with lines and colours, on a given panel or wall, the visible surface of any body, so that at a certain distance and from a certain position it appears in relief and just like the body itself."

It was not, of course, as simple as that. There were the mathematical problems of linear perspective which Alberti himself solved. There was the question of choice—that is to say the question of the artist doing justice to nature by choosing to represent what was typical of nature as her best.

Yet the artist's relation to nature was comparable to that of the scientist's. Like the scientist, the artist applied reason and method to the

study of the world. He observed and ordered his findings. The parallelism of the two disciplines is later demonstrated by the example of Leonardo.

Although often employed far less accurately during the following centuries, the metaphorical model for the function of painting at this time was *the mirror*. Alberti cites Narcissus when he sees himself reflected in the water as the first painter. The mirror renders the appearances of nature and simultaneously delivers them into the hand of man. And this function is in itself a symbol of man's position.

It is extremely hard to reconstruct ideological attitudes of the past. In the light of more recent developments and the questions raised by them, we tend to iron out the ambiguities which may have existed before the questions were formed. In the early Renaissance, for example, the Humanist view and a medieval Christian view could still be easily combined. Man became the equal of God, but both retained their traditional positions. Arnold Hauser writes of the early Renaissance:

'The seat of God was the centre round which the heavenly spheres revolved, the earth was the centre of the material universe, and man himself a self-contained microcosm round which, as it were, revolved the whole of nature, just as the celestial bodies revolved round that fixed star, the earth.'

The Eye of Man

Thus man could observe nature around him on every side and be enhanced both by what he observed and by his own ability to observe without considering that he was essentially part of that nature. *Man was the eye for which reality had been made visual*: the clear objective eye, the focal point of Renaissance perspective. The human greatness of this eye lay in its ability to reflect and contain, like a mirror, what was.

The Copernican revolution, Protestantism, the Counter-Reformation destroyed the Renaissance position. With this destruction modern subjectivity was born. The artist becomes primarily concerned with creation. His own genius takes the place of nature as the marvel

It is the gift of his genius, his 'spirit', his 'grace' which makes him god-like. At the same time the equality between man and God is totally destroyed. Mystery enters art to emphasize the inequality. A century after Alberti's claim that art and science are parallel activities, Michelangelo speaks—no longer of imitating nature—but of imitating our Lord.

'In order to imitate in some degree the venerable image of Our Lord, is not enough to be a painter, a great and skilful master; I believe the one must further be of blameless life, even if possible a saint, that the Holy Spirit may inspire one's understanding.'

The Theatre Stage

It would take us too far from our field even to attempt to trace the history of art from Michelangelo onwards—Mannerism, the baroque, 17th- and 18th-century classicism. What is relevant to our purpose is that, from Michelangelo until the French Revolution, the metaphorical model for the function of painting becomes the *theatre stage*. It may seem unlikely that the same model works for a visionary like El Greco, a Stoic like Poussin (who actually worked from stage models he built himself) and a middle-class moralist like Chardin. Yet all the artists of these two centuries shared certain assumptions. For them all the power of art lay in its *artificiality*. That is to say they were concerned with constructing comprehensive examples of some truth such as could not be met with in such an ecstatic, pointed, sublime or meaningful way in life itself.

Painting became a schematic art. The painter's task was no longer to represent or imitate what existed: it was to summarize experience. Nature is now what man has to redeem himself from. The artist becomes responsible not simply for the means of conveying a truth, but also for the truth itself. Painting ceases to be a branch of natural science and becomes a branch of the moral sciences.

In the theatre the spectator faces events from whose consequences he is immune: he may be affected emotionally and morally but he is physically removed, protected, separate, from what is happening before his eyes. What is happening is artificial. It is *he* who now represents nature—not the work of art. And if, at the same time, it is from himself that he must redeem himself—this represents the contradiction of the Cartesian division which prophetically or actually so dominated these two centuries.

Rousseau and Kant

Rousseau, Kant and the French Revolution—or rather, all the developments which lay behind the thought of the philosophers and the actions of the Revolution—made it impossible to go on believing in constructed order as against natural chaos. The metaphorical model changed again and once more it applies over a long period despite dramatic changes of style. The new model is that of the *personal account*. Nature no longer confirms or enhances the artist as he investigates it. Nor is he any longer concerned with creating 'artificial' examples, for these depend upon the common recognition of certain moral values. He is now alone, surrounded by nature from which his own experience separates him.

Nature is what he sees through his experience. There is thus in all 19th-century art—from the 'pathetic fallacy' of the Romantics to the 'optics' of the Impressionists—considerable confusion about where the artist's experience stops and nature begins. The artist's personal account is his attempt to make his experience as real as nature, which he can never reach, by communicating it to others. The considerable suffering of most 19th-century artists arose out of this contradiction: their advanced view of reality made them require the social confirmation which that very view made impossible.

Raft of the Medusa

Speech, as the recounting of experience and the means of making it real, preoccupied the Romantics. Hence their constant comparisons, between painting and poetry. Géricault, whose *Raft of the Medusa* was the first painting of a contemporary event consciously based on eye-witness accounts, wrote in 1821:

'How I should like to be able to show our cleverest painters several portraits, which are such close resemblances to nature, whose easy pose leaves nothing to be desired, and of which one can really say that all they lack is the power of speech.'

In 1850 Delacroix wrote: 'I have told myself a hundred times that painting—that is to say the material thing called painting—was no more than the pretext, the bridge between the mind of the painter and that of the spectator. ...'

For Corot experience was a far less flamboyant and more modest affair than for the Romantics. But nevertheless he still emphasizes how essential the personal and the relative are to art.

In 1856 he wrote: 'Reality is one part of art: feeling completes it . . . before any site and any object, abandon yourself to your first impression. If you have really been touched, you will convey to others the sincerity of your emotion.'

Zola, who was one of the first defenders of the Impressionists, defined a work of art as 'a corner of nature seen through a temperament'. The definition applies to the whole of the 19th century and is another way of describing the same metaphorical model.

Powerlessness before Nature

Monet was the most theoretical of the Impressionists and the most anxious to break through the century's barrier of subjectivity. For him (at least theoretically) the role of his temperament was reduced to that of the process of perception. He speaks of 'a close fusion' with nature. But the result of this fusion, however harmonious, is a sense of powerlessness—which suggests that, bereft of his subjectivity, he has nothing to put in its place. Nature is no longer a field for study; it has become an overwhelming force. One way or another the confrontation between the artist and nature in the 19th century is an unequal one. Either the heart of man or the grandeur of nature dominates.

'I have painted for half a century,' wrote Monet, 'and will soon have passed my sixty-ninth year, but, far from decreasing, my sensitivity has sharpened with age. As long as constant contact with the outside world can sustain the ardour of my curiosity, and my hand remains the quiet and faithful servant of my perception, I have nothing to fear from age. I have no other wish than a close fusion with nature, and I desire no other fate than (according to Goethe) to have worked and lived in harmony with her rules. Beside her grandeur, her power and her immortality, the human creature seems but a miserable atom.'

Diagrams and Signs

I am well aware of the schematic nature of this brief survey. Does, for example, the model of the theatre really fit the landscapes of Ruysdael? Yes, probably it does. Is not Delacroix in some senses a transitional figure between the 18th and 19th centuries? Perhaps. The scheme, however, is true enough to help us appreciate the nature of the change which Cubism represented.

The metaphorical model of Cubism is the *diagram*: the diagram being a visible, symbolic representation of invisible processes, forces, structures. A diagram need not eschew certain aspects of appearances: but these too will be treated symbolically as *signs*, not as imitations or recreations.

The model of the *diagram* differs from that of the *mirror* in that it suggests a concern with what is not self-evident. It differs from the model of the *theatre stage* in that it does not have to concentrate upon climaxes but can reveal the continuous. It differs from the model of the *personal account* in that it aims at a general truth.

The Renaissance artist imitated nature. The Mannerist and Classic artist reconstructed examples from nature in order to transcend nature. The 19th-century artist experienced nature. The Cubist realized that his awareness of nature was part of nature.

Heisenberg speaks as a modern physicist. 'Natural science does not simply describe and explain nature; it is part of the interplay between nature and ourselves: it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning.' Similarly, the frontal facing of nature became inadequate in art.

Cubist Space

How did the Cubists express their intimation of the new relation existing between man and nature?

First, Cubism broke the illusionist three-dimensional space which had existed in painting since the Renaissance. It did not destroy it. Nor did it muffle it—as Gauguin and the Pont-Aven school had done. It broke its continuity. There is space in a Cubist painting in that one form can be inferred to be behind another. But the relation between any two forms does not, as it does in illusionist space, establish the rule for all the spatial relationships between all the forms portrayed in the picture. This is possible without a nightmarish deformation of space occurring, because the two-dimensional surface of the picture is always there as arbiter and resolver of different claims. The picture surface acts in a Cubist painting as the constant which allows us to appreciate the variables. Before and after every sortie of our imagination into the problematic spaces and through the interconnexions of a Cubist painting, we find our gaze resettled on the picture surface, aware once more of two-dimensional shapes on a two-dimensional board or canvas.

This makes it impossible to *confront* the objects or forms in a Cubist work. Not only because of the multiplicity of viewpoints—so that, say, a view of a table from below is combined with a view of the table from above and from the side—but also because the forms portrayed never present themselves as a totality. The totality is the surface of the picture; *which is now the origin and sum of all that one sees*. The focal point of Renaissance perspective, fixed and outside the picture, but to which everything within the picture was drawn, has become a field of vision which is the picture itself.

It took Picasso and Braque three years to arrive at this extraordinary transformation. In most of their pictures from 1907 to 1910 there are still compromises with Renaissance space. The effect of this is to deform the subject. The figure or landscape *becomes* the construction, instead of the construction being the picture, acting as an expression of the relation between viewer and subject.

After 1910 all references to appearances are made as signs on the picture surface. A circle for a top of a bottle, a lozenge for an eye, letters for : newspaper, a volute for the head of a violin, etc. Collage was an extension of the same principle. Part of the actual or imitation surface of an object portrayed was stuck on to the surface of the picture as a sign referring to, but not imitating, its appearance. A little later painting borrowed from this experience of collage, so that, say, a pair of lips or bunch of grapes were referred to by a drawing which 'pretended' to be on a piece of white paper stuck on to the picture surface.

Cubist Form

Second, there was their treatment of form, which gave the Cubists their name. They were said to paint everything in *cubes*. Afterwards this was connected with Cézanne's remark: "Treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, everything in proper perspective . . ." And from then on the misunderstanding has continued—encouraged, let be said, by a lot of confused assertions by some of the lesser Cubists themselves.

The misunderstanding is that the Cubists wanted to simplify—for the sake of simplification. In some of the Picassos and Braques of 1908 may look as though this is the case. Before finding their new vision, they had to jettison traditional complexities. But their aim was to arrive at a far more complex image of reality than had ever been attempted painting before.

To appreciate this we must abandon a habit of centuries: the habit of looking at every object or body as though it were complete in itself, its completeness making it separate. The Cubists were concerned with the interaction between objects.

They reduced forms to a combination of cubes, cones, cylinders—later, to arrangements of flatly articulated facets or planes with sharp edges—so that the elements of any one form were interchangeable with another, whether a hill, a woman, a violin, a carafe, a table or a ha-

thus, as against the Cubist discontinuity of space, they created a continuity of structure. Yet when we talk of the Cubist discontinuity of space, it is only to distinguish it from the convention of linear Renaissance perspective.

Space is part of the continuity of the events within it. It is in itself an event, comparable with other events. It is not a mere container. And this is what the few Cubist masterpieces show us. The space between objects is part of the same structure as the objects themselves. The forms are simply reversed so that, say, the top of a head is a convex element and the adjacent space which it does not fill is a concave element.

The Cubists created the possibility of art revealing processes instead of static entities. The content of their art consists of various modes of interaction: the interaction between different aspects of the same event, between empty space and filled space, between structure and movement, between the seer and the thing seen.

Rather than ask of a Cubist picture: Is it true? or: Is it sincere? one should ask: Does it continue?

Form and Concept

Today it is easy to see that, since Cubism, painting has become more and more diagrammatic, even when there has been no direct Cubist influence—as, say, in Surrealism. In a recent number of *Art and Artists* (Sept. 1966, London), Eddie Wolfram in an article about Francis Bacon writes: 'Painting today functions directly as a conceptual activity in philosophical terms and the art object acts only as a cypher reference to tangible reality.'

This was part of the Cubist prophecy. But only part. Byzantine art might equally well be accommodated within Wolfram's definition. To understand the full Cubist prophecy we must examine the content of their art.

A Cubist painting like Braque's *Nature morte avec cartes à jouer* of 1912 is two-dimensional in so far as one's eye comes back again and again to the surface of the picture. We start from the surface, we follow a sequence of forms which leads into the picture, and then suddenly we arrive back at the surface again and deposit our newly acquired knowledge upon it, before making another foray. This is why I called the Cubist picture-surface the origin and sum of all that we can see in the picture. There is nothing decorative about such two-dimensionality, nor is it merely an area offering possibilities of juxtaposition for dissociated images—as in the case of much recent neo-Dadaist or Pop art. We begin with the surface, but since everything in the picture refers back to the surface we begin with the conclusion. We then search—not for an explanation, as we do if presented with an image with a single, predominant meaning (a man laughing, a mountain, a reclining nude), but for some understanding of the configuration of events whose interaction is the conclusion from which we began. When we 'deposit our

newly acquired knowledge upon the picture surface', what we in fact do is to find the sign for what we have just discovered: a sign which was always there but which previously we could not read.

To make the point clearer it is worth comparing a Cubist picture with any work in the Renaissance tradition. Let us say Pollaiuolo's *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*. In front of the Pollaiuolo the spectator completes the picture. The picture is formally complete in itself—thanks to the art of 'composition', which is the art of arranging forms within a limited area, of connecting them by fitting them into a pattern which gives aesthetic pleasure and establishes an aesthetic unity. Nevertheless it is the spectator who draws the conclusions and infers all except the aesthetic relations between the pieces of evidence offered—the archers, the martyr, the plain laid out behind, etc. It is he who through his reading of what is portrayed seals its unity of meaning. The work is presented to him. Almost one has the feeling that St. Sebastian was martyred so that he should be able to explain this picture. The complexity of the forms and the scale of the space depicted enhance his sense of achievement, of grasp.

In a Cubist picture the conclusion and the connexions are given. They are what the picture is made of. They are its content. The spectator has to find his place *within* this content whilst the complexity of the form and the 'discontinuity' of the space remind him that his view from this place is bound to be only partial.

Content and Function

Such content and its functioning was prophetic because it coincided with the new scientific view of nature which rejected simple causality and the single permanent all-seeing viewpoint.

Heisenberg writes:

'One may say that the human ability to understand may be in a certain sense unlimited. But the existing scientific concepts cover always only very limited part of reality, and the other part that has not yet been understood is infinite. Whenever we proceed from the known to the unknown we may hope to understand, but we may have to learn at the same time a new meaning of the word understanding.'¹

Such a notion implies a change in the methodology of research and invention. W. Grey Waters, the physiologist, writes:

'Classical physiology, as we have seen, tolerated only one single unknown quantity in its equations—in any experiment there could only be one thing at a time under investigation. . . . We cannot extract one independent variable in the classical manner; we have to deal with the interaction of many unknowns and variables, all the time. . . . In practice, this implies that not one but many—as many as possible observations must be made at once and compared with one another

¹ Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*. Allen and Unwin (p. 172).

and that whenever possible a simple known variable should be used to modify the several complex unknowns so that their tendencies and interdependence can be assessed.²

The Studio as Laboratory

The best Cubist works of 1910, 1911 and 1912 were sustained and precise models for the method of searching and testing described above. That is to say they force the senses and imagination of the spectator to calculate, omit, doubt and conclude in a similar way. The difference is one of appeal. Because the act of looking at a picture is far less concentrated, the picture can appeal to wider and more various areas of the spectator's previous experience. Art is concerned with memory: experiment is concerned with predictions.

The connexion, however, is not only between the Cubist studio and the modern laboratory. The need to adapt oneself constantly to presented totalities—rather than making inventories or supplying a transcendental meaning as in front of the Pollaiuolo—is a feature of modern experience which affects everybody through the mass media and modern communication systems.

'In the electric age', writes Marshall McLuhan,³ 'when our central, nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action. . . . The aspiration of our time for wholeness, empathy and depth of awareness is a natural adjunct of electric technology. The age of mechanical industry that preceded us found vehement assertion of private outlook the natural mode of expression. . . . The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly eager to have things and people declare their beings totally.'

The Cubists were the first artists to attempt to paint totalities rather than agglomerations.

The Impossibility of Knowledge

I must emphasize again that the Cubists were not aware of all that we are now reading into their art. Picasso and Braque and Léger kept silent because they knew that they might be doing more than they knew. The lesser Cubists tended to believe that their break with tradition had freed them from the bondage of appearances so that they might deal with some kind of spiritual essence. The idea that their art coincided with the implications of certain new scientific and technological developments was entertained but never fully worked out. There is no evidence at all that they recognized the change that had taken place in the world's economic structure. It is for these reasons that I have constantly referred to their *intimation* of a transformed world: it amounted to no more than that.

² W. Grey Waters, *The Living Brain*, Pelican Books (p. 69).

³ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, McGraw-Hill, 1964. (pp. 4 and 5).

One cannot explain the exact dates of the maximum Cubist achievement—the phase sometimes called *Hermetic*, sometimes *Synthetic*. Why 1910 to 1912 rather than 1905 to 1907? Nor is it possible to explain exactly why certain artists, at exactly the same time, arrived at a very different view of the world—artists ranging from Bonnard to Duchamp or de Chirico. To do so we would need to know an *impossible* amount about each separate individual development. (In that impossibility—which is an absolute one—lies our freedom from determinism.)

We have to work with partial explanations. With the advantage of 60 years' hindsight, the correlations I have tried to establish between Cubism and the rest of history seem to me to be undeniable. The precise route of the connexions remains unknown. They do not inform us about the intentions of the artists: they do not explain exactly why Cubism took place in the manner it did: but they do help to disclose the widest possible continuing meaning of Cubism.

Pure Theory

Two more reservations. Because Cubism represented so fundamental a revolution in the history of art, I have had to discuss it as though it were pure theory. Only in this way could I make its revolutionary content clear. But naturally it was not pure theory. It was nothing like so neat, consistent or reduced. There are Cubist paintings full of anomalies and marvellous gratuitous tenderness and confused excitement. We see the beginning in the light of the conclusions it suggested. But it was only beginning, and a beginning cut short.

For all their insight into the inadequacy of appearances and of the frontal view of nature, the Cubists used such appearances as the means of reference to nature. In the maelstrom of their new constructions their liaison with the events which provoked them is shown by way of a simple, almost naïve reference to a pipe stuck in the 'sitter' mouth, a bunch of grapes, a fruit dish or the title of a daily newspaper. Even in some of the most 'hermetic' paintings—for example Braque's *Le Portugais*—you can find naturalistic allusions to details of the subject's appearance—such as the buttons on the musician's jacket—buried intact within the construction. There are only a very few works—for instance Picasso's *Le Modèle* of 1912—where such allusions have been totally dispensed with.

The difficulties were probably both intellectual and sentimental. The naturalist allusions seemed necessary in order to offer a measure for judging the transformation. If the subject could not be identified by a naturalistic clue, the picture became abstract. Subsequently most abstract art has failed to solve the same problem in reverse: without reference to specific experience it is very hard to create any sense of urgency.

Perhaps also the Cubists were reluctant to part with appearances because they suspected that in art they could never be the same again. Details are smuggled in and hidden as mementoes. It is this which gives these Cubist works their unrepeatable poignancy.

The second reservation concerns the social content of Cubism—or, rather, its lack of it. I have already said that one cannot expect of a Cubist painting the same kind of social content as one finds in a Brueghel or a Courbet. The mass media and the arrival of new publics have profoundly changed the social role of the Fine Arts. It remains true, however, that the Cubists—during the moment of Cubism—were unconcerned about the personalized human and social implications of what they were doing. This, I think, is because they had to simplify. The problem before them was so complex that their manner of stating it and their trying to solve it absorbed all their attention. As innovators they wanted to make their experiments in the simplest possible conditions; consequently they took as subjects whatever was at hand and made least demands. The content of these works is the relation between the seer and the seen. This relation is only possible given the fact that the seer inherits a precise historical economic and social situation. Otherwise they become meaningless. They do not illustrate a human or social situation, they posit it.

For the application of the findings of the Cubist experiments, for the wider use of their personalized social implications, we must look to more recent work—to the paintings of Léger since 1920, to the paintings of Picasso of the Guernica period, to the architecture of Le Corbusier and those who were influenced by him, to the pictures of Wilfredo Lam and Matta, to certain sculptures by Lipchitz and Zadkine,⁴ to the projects of the Constructivists.

Cubism Now

I spoke of the continuing meaning of Cubism. To some degree this meaning has changed and will change again according to the needs of the present. The bearings we read with the aid of Cubism vary according to our position. What is the reading now?

It is being more and more urgently claimed that 'the modern tradition' begins with Jarry, Duchamp and the Dadaists. This confers legitimacy upon the recent developments of neo-Dadaism, auto-destructive art, Happenings, etc. The claim implies that what separates the characteristic art of the 20th century from the art of all previous centuries is its acceptance of Unreason, its social desperation, its extreme subjectivity and its forced dependence upon existential experience.

Hans Arp, one of the original Dadist spokesmen, wrote:

'The Renaissance taught men the haughty exaltation of their reason. Modern times, with their science and technology, turned men towards megalomania. The confusion of our epoch results from this over-estimation of reason.'

⁴ For a fuller description of the use to which Zadkine put Cubism in his monument to the Destruction of Rotterdam during the Second World War, see the author's *Permanent Red*, Methuen, London, 1960.

"The law of chance, which embraces all other laws and is as unfathomable to us as the depths from which all life arises, can only be comprehended by complete surrender to the Unconscious."³

Arp's statements are repeated today with a slightly modified vocabulary by all contemporary apologists of outrageous art. (I use the word outrageous descriptively and not in a pejorative sense.)

During the intervening years, the Surrealists, Picasso, de Chirico, Miro, Klee, Dubuffet, the Abstract Expressionists and many others can be drafted into the same tradition: the tradition whose aim is to cheat the world of its hollow triumphs, and disclose its pain.

Outrageous Extremism

The example of Cubism forces us to recognize that this is a one-sided interpretation of history. Outrageous art has many earlier precedents. In periods of doubt and transition the majority of artists have always tended to be preoccupied with the fantastic, the uncontrollable and the horrific. The greater extremism of contemporary artists is the result of their having no fixed social role; to some degree they can create their own. Thus there is no precedent in art history for, say, auto-destructive art. But there are precedents for the spirit of it in the history of other activities: heretical religions, alchemy, witchcraft, etc.

The real break with tradition, or the real reformation of that tradition occurred with Cubism itself. The modern tradition, based on a qualitatively different relationship being established between man and nature, began, not in despair, but in affirmation.

Object and Subject

The proof that this was the objective role of Cubism lies in the fact that however much its spirit was rejected, it supplied to all later movements the primary means of their own liberation. That is to say it re-created the syntax of art so that it could accommodate modern experience. The proposition that a work of art is a new object and not simply the expression of its subject, the structuring of a picture to admit the existence of different modes of space and time, the inclusion in a work of art of extraneous objects, the dislocation of forms to reveal movement or change, the combining of hitherto separate and distinct media—the diagrammatic use of appearances—these were the revolutionary innovations of Cubism.

It would be foolish to underestimate the achievements of post-Cubist art. (In fact some of it continued in the spirit of Cubism.) Nevertheless it is fair to say that in general the art of the post-Cubist period has been anxious and highly subjective. What the evidence of Cubism shows prevent us doing is concluding from this that anxiety and extreme s-

³ Quoted in *Dada* by Hans Richter, Thames and Hudson, London, (p. 55.)

jectivity constitute the nature of modern art. They constitute the nature of art in a period of extreme ideological confusion and inverted political frustration.

During the first decade of this century a transformed world became theoretically possible and the necessary forces of change could already be recognised as existing. Cubism was the art which reflected the possibility of this transformed world and the confidence it inspired. Thus, in a certain sense, it was the most modern art—as it was also the most philosophically complex—which has yet existed.

The vision of the Cubist moment still coincides with what is technologically possible. Yet three-quarters of the world remain undernourished and the foreseeable growth of the world population is outstripping the production of food. Meanwhile millions of the privileged are the prisoners of their own sense of increasing powerlessness.

The political struggle will be gigantic in its range and duration. The transformed world will not arrive as the Cubists imagined it. It will be born of a longer and more terrible history. We cannot see the end of the present period of political inversion, famine and exploitation. But the moment of Cubism reminds us that, if we are to be representative of our century—and not merely its passive creatures—the aim of achieving that end must constantly inform our consciousness.

Cubism and Politics

Some will see this as an attempt to force Cubism into politics: to turn the meaning of Cubism into a political slogan. I would answer that it is an attempt to relate Cubism to the fundamentals of art.

The moment at which a piece of music begins provides a clue to the nature of all art. The incongruity of that moment, compared to the uncounted, unperceived silence which preceded it, is the secret of art. What is the meaning of that incongruity and the shock which accompanies it? It is to be found in the distinction between the given and the desired. All art is the attempt to define and make *unnatural* this distinction.

For a long time it was thought that art was the imitation and celebration of nature. The confusion arose because the concept of nature itself was a projection of the desired. Now that we have cleansed our view of nature, we see that art is an expression of our sense of the inadequacy of the given—which we are not obliged to accept with gratitude. Art mediates between our good fortune and our disappointment. Sometimes it mounts to the pitch of horror: sometimes it concentrates its energy upon the insistence that reality should be changed so that it may continue as it is, and become unchangeable. Sometimes it describes the desired.

Thus art, however free or anarchic its mode of expression, is always a plea for greater control and an example, within the artificial limits of a 'medium', of the advantages of such control. Theories about the

artist's inspiration are all projections back on to the artist of the effect which his work has upon us. The only inspiration which exists is the intimation of our own potential. Inspiration is the mirror image of history: by means of it we can see our past, while turning our back upon it. And it is precisely this which happens when a piece of music begins. We suddenly become aware of the previous silence at the same moment as our attention is concentrated upon future sequences and resolutions in which we can share.

The Cubist moment was such a moment in history.

review

Rosalind Delmar

The Big Fish

*Arms and Influence*¹ presents an American view of present international relationships. It is a world of a permanent contest of nerves, in which nations have to use all methods at their disposal to persuade other nations to behave in desirable ways; a world potentially without rules but from which rules have to be extracted only to be explicitly imposed. The ideological tool-kit used to isolate the rules compounds industrial negotiation, games theory, communications theory, behaviourism and child psychology. The instruments are nuclear weapons and conventional forces.

The nuclear weapons are used to deter or to compel action. 'Modern technology has drastically enhanced the strategic importance of purely unconstructive, unacquisitive pain and damage, whether used against us or in our own defence. This in turn enhances the importance of war and threats of war as techniques of influence, not of destruction, coercion and deterrence, not of conquest and defence, of bargaining and intimidation.' The threat of more to come would be used during nuclear war, should one occur.

Conventional forces are used to back up threats when they may not have been sufficiently overt. When the United States went into the Lebanon, he explains, they were sending a clear signal to the Soviet Union not to intervene in the Lebanon, Jordan or Iraq. When nuclear installations were destroyed in North Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin incident, it was designed as 'a communication which would be received by the North Vietnamese and Chinese with high fidelity'. These for

¹ Thomas C. Shelling, *Arms and Influence*, Newhaven and London, Yale University Press, 1966.

also embody a threat. The function of the troops in Berlin is to act, should this be necessary, and thus to trigger off a larger war should the *status quo* be disturbed.

US diplomacy and its military instruments are the Pooh Bah of international politics. According to Piaget, says Shelling, children learn the principle of 'making the punishment fit the crime' at a very early age. So why not grown-up nation states? Unfortunately only the larger states even qualify for human status. Mossadeq's Iran was a small puppy which had to be house-trained; North Vietnam a dog which has killed a chicken. On the other hand, the Soviet Union behaves like a recalcitrant child, and China like a thief in the night. Faced with such indiscipline, America must impose order, and may even be eventually forced to wreak the wrath of God upon the world.

But so far the US has attempted to maintain the *status quo*; its main problem is to understand it. Shelling anticipated the problem and its possible solution in a previous book.² He pointed out then that 'civilized modern students of international affairs' are at a disadvantage compared with Machiavelli or the ancient Chinese, because they have concepts like trust and good faith at their disposal. To cope with the modern world we must learn once more from the ancients, who 'drank wine from the same glass to demonstrate the absence of poison, met in public places to inhibit the massacre of one by the other, and even deliberately exchanged spies to facilitate transmittal of authentic information'.

Arms and Influence embodies an attempt to learn from these ancient tactics. Although he claims to use historical examples as illustrations, Shelling deploys them as a series of analogies. Thus Russian intervention in Budapest in 1956 is held to be like the Persian campaign in Asia Minor as described by Xenophon, and quotation is made also from Thucydides, Caesar and Shakespeare. It is relatively unimportant that he is capable of misunderstanding the past in the most elementary way—for example, he believes that the Crusaders sacked Jerusalem 'while the mood was on them . . . burned things that they might, with time to reflect, have carried away instead, and raped women that, with time to think about it, they might have married instead'—what are serious are his misconceptions about the present, whether or not he claims to derive them from history.

Shelling manages to maintain at one and the same time that the principles of inter-state relations have been the same at all times and places and that the advent of nuclear weapons has brought about a new diplomatic revolution. But the distrust and bad faith that he sees as specific to the nuclear age have been features of international relations since as well as before Machiavelli's time, and in any case are not the most important factors. Perhaps his horror indicates the traumatic effect of America's first sustained entanglement with the international system. What he would like us to believe is that once nuclear weapons exist all forms of international relations are based on blackmail. In other words

² *The Strategy of Conflict*. Harvard University Press, 1963.

that principles of foreign policy are determined by the development of military technology, and that therefore a revolution in military technology leads to a corresponding revolution in the field of international politics. But this is not the case. The political division of the world in 1945 to 1949 was not in any way dependent on the balance of terror and was more influential in determining principles of foreign policy for both sides than the subsequent development of nuclear strike capacity. This is not to deny that weapons technology is an important part of the infra-structure of the international system. However, its theoretical implications have been mediated through the changes and developments in military doctrine, a field which Shelling ignores. Moreover, he fails to realize that the choice of weapons themselves is a political decision determined by politico-military objectives. The Vietnamese for example, would be highly unlikely to use napalm or bombers against villages in the South.

The war in Vietnam is seen as a coercive campaign. It raises the possibility of a new kind of 'limited war', and as such might, Shelling thinks, provide a model for war on China. But instead of having conventional explosives the United States would use low-yield nuclear weapons. The tactics would, however, be the same—to select what it is thought the enemy holds most precious and destroy that. Such a war would be fought either to destroy the present government or to compel the government to meet certain demands. As a contingency plan this need not be regarded with great seriousness. It is the implications for Vietnam that are most significant. For the bombing of North Vietnam is viewed not only by Shelling, but also by the White House and the Pentagon as a means of putting pressure on the government of the DRV: 'The object is to exact good behaviour or to oblige discontinuance of mischief, not to destroy the subject altogether.' This reliance on a technique (which Shelling calls compellence) refuses to accept that the adversary may be possessed of such morale and internal cohesion that the effect will be either failure for the aggressor or complete destruction of the victim. It reiterates in more subtle form the might is right maxim. Of course the alternatives, failure or destruction, are not desired. Victory is the objective, and preservation of face. After all, Shelling himself remarks, 'we lost thirty thousand dead in Korea save face for the United States and the United Nations, not to save South Korea for the South Koreans, and it was undoubtedly worth it

The record of the Wilson regime—assaults on the industrial organizations and living-standards of the working class, racist legislation, alliance with US imperialism, collusion with white settlers, and suppression of national liberation movements—needs no labouring. What have been the internal repercussions within the Labour Party? A mass defection of constituency activists, working-class voters and intellectual supporters—yet no major fissure within the party apparatus, no major withdrawal of union support, no determined secession of left MPs. The first two articles in this issue of the review are published as contributions to the discussion among socialists about the changing political map of the British Left.

First, we are publishing Tom Nairn's unsparing dissection of the dreams of Scottish nationalism—one of the alternatives to which disillusioned erstwhile Labour supporters have turned. His historical insights throw light on the anomalies of Scottish consciousness today, and explain the rhetoric and the class character of the present nationalist movement—making clear that only a revolutionary nationalism which laid the ghosts of the bourgeois past could achieve political validity in Scotland.

Secondly, this issue contains an interview with Michael Foot—symbolic leader of the Labour Left, and most eloquent spokesman for a point of view and a political perspective whose survival, particularly among socialists of older generations, goes much of the way to explaining the resistance of the Labour Party structures to the loss of so much of its mass support. It goes without saying that this perspective is not our own. We publish this interview as a document which clarifies the political choices before the British Left—above all the younger generation.

Western Marxists have in general paid little attention to war or military strategy. André Glucksmann's book 'The Discourse of War', published

earlier this year in Paris, is a philosophical study of both. The chapter which we publish here, with an introduction on the significance of this work, is also unusual for the sophistication with which it discusses the implications of Mao Tse Tung's thought. This has been for the most part either oversimplified—by admirers as well as detractors—or else treated as a scholarly corpus for sinologues. Glucksmann provides a theoretical account for discussion among Marxists.

Readers will be familiar with Lee Russell's articles on individual film directors, which constituted one of the main elements of the *Motifs* section of the review from its inception in NLR 23. He has now completed a book on 'Signs and Meaning in the Cinema', of which we publish a chapter here. A true theoretical foundation for the cinema has long been lacking—though its importance as the art-form par excellence of the 20th century was acknowledged by Lenin 50 years ago. Lee Russell's work begins to provide this. This is one of the few contributions to aesthetics which produces operational concepts. Anyone who sees films should read it.



Routledge & Kegan Paul

Soviet Sociology

Historical Antecedents and Current Appraisals

Edited with an introduction by ALEX SIMIRENKO. An important collection of articles and essays which surveys the growth, decline and re-birth of Soviet sociology in its historical context. It offers a helpful appraisal of its prospects for significant work in the future.

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Essays in the Theory of Society

RALF DAHRENDORF *Professor of Sociology, University of Constance*. 'Provocative, informative, lucid, pleasurable—one could go on multiplying complimentary adjectives about these essays. They show sociology to be a discipline in which the literate and human values still flourish.'—*Guardian*

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Tom Nairn

The Three Dreams of Scottish Nationalism

Modern Scottish Nationalism has led a fluctuating, intermittent existence since 1853. Now, quite suddenly, it has become a more serious political reality. In the past it has gone through many renaissances, followed by even more impressive and longer-lasting collapses into inertia; but the present upsurge looks likely to last longer than others, at least, and to produce more of a mark on history.

Seen from without—from London, or in the perspective of British politics—the change appears welcome for many reasons. Like the companion Nationalism of the Welsh, it brings an element of novelty into the hopelessness and corruption of the post-imperial political scene. Obviously, fringe nationalisms will be good for the English, by forcing upon them a more painful reassessment of

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themselves than any they have yet undergone. The smug 'deep sleep' Orwell spoke of—the fruit of the oldest and most successful of modern imperialisms—would be more disturbed by the loss of Wales or Scotland than ever it was by the loss of India or Africa. And at the moment, a particular attraction to many must seem the near-destruction of the Labour Party's power which would result from the permanent loss of their Scottish or Welsh strongholds. In the slow, festering decay of British State and society, they are the most important forces of disintegration to have appeared yet: they prefigure the dismemberment of the united British society which built up the imperial system itself. They are at once a product of the collapse of the system, and the sharpest possible comment on the advanced state of this collapse. What justice it would be, if the Wilson Government which came to power to 'save the Pound' ended by losing Wales and Scotland as well!

The importance of the phenomenon demands that we should look at it less superficially, however. What is Scottish Nationalism in itself, as distinct from its external repercussions? Such a consideration of its meaning—as with other, comparable phenomena of modern nationalism—must lead to recognition of the deep contradictions embodied by it. Only some insight into these contradictions can allow us to try and form any real estimate of the movement's significance.

Dream-Country

Externally a positive reaction to the humiliating agony of a long era, Scottish Nationalism has another inwardness. For the Scots themselves, it is the late refflorescence of a dream, the hope of an identity, to which they have clung, obscurely and stubbornly, across centuries of provincial stagnation. Such a dream—and still more so, the time of its refflorescence—have a meaning which is bound to be far from clear outside Scotland.

Not that it seems too clearly appreciated within the country, either. Nothing demonstrates more surely the mythical nature of Scottish matter-of-factness and 'realism' than the small amount of effort the Scots have given to the prosaic understanding of what really matters to the country. Their dourness is at once a disguise, and a shield. A stony confrontation of the small change of living—counting the pence—protects them from a broader understanding that might threaten their identity: and also from what a Calvinist heritage apprehends as the sinful inner chaos. Behind the wary eyes and granite countenance of Scotland there lies not one dream only, but a whole inheritance of dreams, whose accumulation has made the psychology of modern Nationalism.

The now dominant dream of Scotland re-born should perhaps be seen as the third phase in the dream-psychology (which has very often been a dream-pathology) of Scottish history. It is deeply marked by both the great dreams that preceded it. Like them, its most important trait is vast, impossible dissociation from the realities of history. The best short definition of Scottish history may be this: Scotland is the land where ideal has never, even for an instant, coincided with fact. More

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nations have had moments of truth, at least. Scotland, never. The resultant chronic laceration of the Scots mind—most brilliantly conveyed to the world in Stevenson's fable of *Jekyll and Hyde*—is the thing which gives poignancy to the hope of a Scotland re-made, when seen from within. Scottish autonomy must appear there as the healing of the secular wound which has informed—and most often poisoned—Scottish consciousness ever since the Union of 1707. The real drama of the situation lies in its potential tragedy. It is not at all evident that the forms of autonomy one can reasonably foresee—whether partial or total—could cure the disease. They might perpetuate it, crystallizing the long, central hopelessness of Scottish history within a framework of archaic bourgeois nationality.

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But this is to anticipate. The logical place to begin is with the first tormented vision Scotland was subjected to: the Reformation. The great debate about Protestantism and Capitalism established a certain affinity between the two; it has not given us any formula for the easy interpretation of the actual relationship in any given society. However, this is not too hard in, say, 17th-century Holland, or in the London or Bristol of the same period. There the immediate value and efficacy of Protestantism as the ideology of a dynamic, mercantile middle class is evident. But the case of Scotland is radically different.

The fact is that the Reformation struck Scotland long before there was any significant mercantile or capitalist development there. Two centuries later, her native bourgeoisie was not strong enough even to retain its independence. Scottish capitalism did not flourish until after the Union, in the context of the British colonial empire. Yet, there is no doubt that Scotland was one of the most radically and successfully Reformed countries of Europe. The movement, which went on vigorously and progressively for over a hundred and fifty years, from the time of Knox to that of the covenanters, corresponds to the Revolutions which have left their stamp on the histories and national psychologies of other countries. Four centuries have passed since the Lords of the Congregation called John Knox home from Geneva to lead this Scottish Revolution. Yet their work is still felt, in every interstice of Scottish life. Often unacknowledged now, the ghosts still preside at every feast-day there, hidden regulators of the tongue.

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This religious revolution derived its power and character precisely from its historical isolation. In the dreadful, chronic anarchy and mediæval poverty of Scotland, it represented the one great effort of the Scottish people towards a meaningful order of their own. The effort was separated by centuries from the material conditions which—in Weber's or Tawney's thesis—should have corresponded to it, the processes of capital accumulation. This meant that originally the Reformation movement was an absolute attempt at moral and religious order, isolated from the very conditions that would have made it an integral part of history—at once 'corrupting' it, and bestowing upon it a real historical sense. Just because it could not be the veiled ideology of a class, the Scottish Reformation was bound to be an abstract, millennial dream—in effect, a desperate effort at escape from history, rather than a logical chapter in its unfolding. The Scots wanted, and needed, Salva-

tion in the most total sense imaginable. Scotland's Revolution gave it them neat.

The harsh absoluteness of the Scots Theocracy reflected its historical displacement. It was a translation of theology into social relationships without mediation. Much more than an opiate, it provided a positive, partly democratic, intelligible social order that struck deep roots in a population whose historical experience until then had been a concentrated dose of everything worst about mediaeval Europe: dearth, weak central power, rapacious struggles for position, Church corruption, brigandage and wars. The divine, black dream divorced from time was also a form of civilization. As one historian of the Kirk notes:

'The Kirk's Elders and Ministers who supervised the behaviour of every man and woman in the parish . . . were the nearest thing to a police force that most of Scotland knew till the 19th century. It was a force not because of any physical power but because of its prestige, because the people belonged to the Kirk and believed in it, even though they might grumble or tremble when it condemned their faults. . .'¹

The price the Scots payed, and still pay, for their possession by this dream was a high one. Long since, it turned into a detestable and crippling burden against which every form of creative culture has had to fight for life, from the 18th-century 'golden age' to the present day. Yet the very identity of Kirk and people—its 'national-popular' character, in Gramsci's phrase—meant that it, more than anything else, has been preserved in Scotland's long and stagnant twilight, far less than a nation yet not a province like any other. The denying demons are still alive. Addicts of the Christian-Marxist dialogue should try and shake hands with them some time, if they want a cure.²

Thus, the original character of the Reformation in Scotland was very far removed from the Weber-Tawney model. But of course this does not affect the fact that, when the conditions of capitalist development did arise in Scotland, much later, they found a country singularly well prepared. Undoubtedly the rapidity and success of the Industrial Revolution in Scotland had something to do with this. E. J. Hobsbawm suggests in *Industry and Empire* that the Kirk's educational system was particularly important here, as well as the more general factors of ethos and psychology.³

The strange, truncated condition of Scotland after 1707 made it natural to search for effective substitutes for the lost national identity. The Kirk was indeed such a substitute. But because of its unworldliness and its limitations of bigotry, inevitably an unsatisfactory one in the long run. In the later 18th century, Scotland produced two contrasting

¹ J. M. Reid, *Kirk and Nation: The Story of the Reformed Church of Scotland*, pp. 52–53.

² Before doing so, however, they would be well-advised to read some classic descriptions of the demons: James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), now available in a Corgi Press edition; or John Buchan's *W. W. Wood* (1927).

³ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: An economic history of Britain since 17* (1968), chapter *The Other Britain*, pp. 252–268.

movements of culture that tried to compensate for the loss in their different ways. Basically similar to developments elsewhere in Europe they acquired a particular meaning from the Scottish dilemma.

One was the Edinburgh Enlightenment associated with the names of David Hume and Adam Smith. This was, in effect, an escape from the peculiar destiny of Scotland, onto the plane of abstract reason (though possibly the taste for abstractions it revealed had something to do with the theological inheritance). There was a cutting edge to Hume's celebrated joke about wishing to be pardoned his Scotticisms, rather than his sins, when on his death-bed. The other movement was the same reaction to the Enlightenment as other cultures produced, towards feeling and the particular: Romanticism. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of Romanticism for Scotland. While the Enlightenment was only an episode, Romanticism entered her soul.

Here was the second of the dreams still implanted in the subsoil of Scottish consciousness. European history shows a general relationship between Romanticism and the Nationalism of the 19th-century, not entirely unlike that between the Reformation and Capitalism which we have already looked at. But again, Scotland was a drastic exception to whatever generalities hold in this field. There, the new freedom of expression and the discovery of folk-culture could scarcely be the precursors or the supports of a new nation in the making (as in Italy, Hungary, Germany), nor the accompaniment of triumphant nationality (as in England and America). The Scottish nationality was dead. Scotland was once more severed from those real conditions which should have lent meaning to her culture. No revolution against the humiliations of the Union, no Scottish 1848 were to furnish a historical counterpoint to Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. The romantic consciousness too, therefore, could only be an absolute dream to the Scots. Unable to function as ideology, as a moving spirit of history, it too was bound to become a possessing demon. Elsewhere, the revelation of the romantic past and the soul of the people informed some real future—in the Scottish limbo, they *were* the nation's reality. Romanticism provided—as the Enlightenment could not, for all its brilliance—a surrogate identity.

Perhaps this function as substitute consciousness has something to do with the peculiar intensity of Romanticism in Scotland, and with the great significance of the country as a locale of the European romantic fancy. It had the right sort of unreality. Such unreality—in effect, the substitution of nostalgia for real experience—has remained at the centre of the characteristically Scottish structure of feeling. David Craig has outlined the problem with admirable precision:

'Such nostalgia, in this 'national' form, was strong in many 19th-century literatures—in English poetry, for example, Arthurian romances and 'Merrie England' work, and in the German equivalents. It is indeed one form of Romantic escapism. What matters for integrity of feeling is the place or value this emotion is allowed to have in the whole experience, how far it is understood, and perhaps resisted. . . .'

The point is, he continues, that in Scotland it never *is* resisted, from Scott himself up to Grassie Gibbon and MacDiarmid.

'It is a mark of the uncertain foothold for a national literature in Scotland that this weak ground of nostalgia should crop up in so many places. Emigration of our most notable talents thus both creates gaps in the imaginative records of the country and tempts our writers into indulgence of their weaker sides . . . What again and again weakens them . . . is the feeling that the ground in their country is shifting under their feet, and this perhaps gets worse the greater the determination to ~~have~~ a national vantage-point, to take up one's stance inside exclusively Scottish territory.'

A most exact historical sense can therefore be given to the assertion that Scotland is peculiarly haunted by the past. She is doubly dominated by her dead generations. At bottom there is the bedrock of Calvinism, the iron, abstract moralism of a people that distrusts this world and itself; then overlaying this, the sentimental, shadow-appropriation of this world and itself through romantic fantasy. Naturally, these strata are also in conflict with one another much of the time. But this is not the place to try and trace out the patterns of the conflict, present in some form in everything distinctively Scottish.

A Machinery of Myth

From this fertile soil has grown the myth-consciousness of modern Scotland, expressed in her Nationalism. Nationalism is her third dream. It is basically a dream of redemption. For the Scots, national existence must represent that magic, whole reality of which they have been cheated by history—in it, their maimed past will be redeemed, in more vivid colours than a history can ever provide.

It may seem surprising that such a consciousness should have emerged from the modern history to which most historians have paid attention: essentially, the grim story of the Scottish Industrial Revolution, with the destruction of Highland society as background.⁵ Yet surely it is not. History has amply demonstrated the capacity of capitalist societies to harbour and transmit apparently archaic social forms and ideas—and, on occasion, to lend them new and monstrous life (as in Germany and Japan). For reasons not adequately studied, this sort of bourgeois society actually fosters these elements alien to itself, as counter weights to its own alienations. Surely there is no society, no landscape, more crassly impersonal and materialist than that of the Scottish Industrial Belt; yet this is the society which has secreted the past we have been looking at, as a dislocated and poignant inner reality.

The criterion of the success with which modern Scotland has done this is simple: the universality of its false consciousness, and the multiplicity of its forms. Scotland's myths of identity are articulated suffi-

⁴ David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People 1680-1830* (1961), pp. 290-291.

⁵ Described in, for instance, R. H. Campbell's *Scotland since 1707: the Rise of an Industrial Society* (1965), and John Prebble's *The Highland Clearances* (1963).

ciently to suit everyone. Though Ministers of the Kirk, lawyers, lairds tycoons and educationalists all have their own contrasting angles on the *Gist*, the principle articulation is between two poles. Nationalist ideology draws all its real force from one or the other. On the one hand there is the popular—or populist—complex of ideas, which coincide enough with the foreign image of the Scots to need little elaboration here. Sporranny, alcoholism, and the ludicrous appropriation of the remains of Scotland's Celtic fringe as a national symbol have been celebrated in a million emetic ballads. It is an image further blackened by a sickening militarism, the relic of Scotland's special role in the building up of British imperialism.⁶ Yet any judgement on this aspect of Scottish national consciousness ought to be softened by the recognition that these are the pathetic symbols of an inarticulate people unable to forge valid correlates of their different experience: the peculiar crudity of Tartanry only corresponds to the peculiarly intense alienation of the Scots on this level. On the other hand, apparently (and very self-consciously!) remote from this, but part of the same machinery, there is the national consciousness of the intelligentsia. This is best seen as a sort of ethereal tartanry. Based upon rejecting the trash-image of Scotland, it aims to substitute something purer, but whose function will be the same: in effect, to seize the *real* soul of the land, beyond its blood-stained philistinism, beyond the Industrial Revolution ('This towering pulpit of the Golden Calf'), even beyond the Kirk and its progeny.⁷ The precarious sense of identity renders it intolerable to a more reflective mind that 'Scotland' should be confused with any of these things.

'My native land should be to me
As a root is to a tree. If a man's labour fills no want there,
His deeds are doomed and his music mute.
This Scotland is not Scotland . . .'⁸

But then, what *is* Scotland? The fringe 'folk' culture that survived the Kirk's persecution and industrialism, and is unknown to most people now living in the country? The vivid dialect of the Lowlands, re-worked into a limited poetic language by the Scots Literary Renaissance? Or some Jungian essence lying inside the living, like the dead generations, waiting on resurrection?⁹

There is no answer to the question. Whatever is chosen cannot possibly bear the weight put on it—be the 'root' of the tree—if one regards it prosaically, in the light of history. Perhaps this is why the Literary

⁶ The significance of this is perhaps most easily comparable to that of the ANZAC day rituals for Australia and New Zealand: societies afraid of their own marginality and provincialism seize on whatever they can as their indubitable contribution to world history, the proof of real identity.

⁷ Edwin Muir, *Scotland 1941*, in *Selected Poems*, ed. T. S. Eliot, (Faber 1965), p. 34.

⁸ Hugh MacDiarmid, *Lament for the Great Music* (1934), in *Collected Poems* (1962), p. 258.

⁹ 'For that is the mask of the Scot of all classes: that he stands in an attitude towards the past unthinkable to Englishmen, and remembers and cherishes the memory of his forebears, good or bad; and there burns alive in him a sense of identity with the dead even to the twentieth generation.' Robert Louis Stevenson, *Weir of Hermiston* (1896), p. 198.

Renaissance had to be almost entirely poetical. Poetry in this sense is a kind of magic: it conjures up the dead and the non-existent into a semblance of the desired object. There is a profound and dangerous ambiguity in this whole movement of thought—of the greatest relevance to understanding Scotland's Nationalism—which has not been sufficiently studied in the past.

First of all, it is evidently tied to the peculiarly intense romanticism we looked at above. In McLuhanite terms, one might say that the content of the new dream is the old ones, however it seems to reject the past in form. David Dalches has also pointed out how Sentimentality '... lodged itself more deeply in Scotland than elsewhere, because of the division between the Scottish head and the Scottish heart that history had already produced.'¹⁰ Modern intellectuals are still struggling with this division. The more they get away from the stale, phoney solutions, the more obvious the sameness of their dilemma becomes. Its insolubility has the following consequences. 'This Scotland'—the real Scotland—is rejected as travesty, and can only be rejected *totally*. Here is a recent accurate gloss on MacDiarmid's well-known poem *Lament for the Great Music*:

'The Scotland of today is no longer Scotland, but a philistine travesty of itself. It is Scotshire, a county in the north of England, an ex-country, an Esau land that has sold its birthright for a mess of English pottage. ... He, as poet, presents the Scottish people with their own image, the thing they have become, and he calls them back, like a true bard, to their own heritage. But so lost are they that they do not recognize it, or him. This is the measure of how deep the rot has gone since 1707.'¹¹

What follows from such radical rejection of an impossibly corrupted reality? Either despair:

'Hauf his soul a Scot maun use
Indulgin' in illusions,
And hauf in gettin' rid o' them
And comin' to conclusions
Wi' the demoralisin' dearth
O' anything worth while on Earth. ...'¹²

Or, more sinisterly, the feeling that the 'real' Scotland which is worth while and has survived it all is—*oneself*. The poetical fantasy, and the poet himself, embody the sought-after *Ghost*. There are then as many *Ghosts* as there are poets, or schools of Sentimentality currently operating. Hence, a widely diffused complacent narcissism—the true mark of cultural provincialism—from which Scottish intellectuals find it hard to escape. It is a structural state of Scottish culture, with roots in the history outlined above.

This, incidentally, is what explains something that has often puzzle

¹⁰ David Dalches, *The Paradox of Scottish Culture* (1964), p. 82.

¹¹ Tom Scott, on *Lament for the Great Music*, in *Agenda*, Autumn-Winter 1967-68, special issue on MacDiarmid and Scottish Poetry, p. 23.

¹² From *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle*, (1926), in *Collected Poems* (1962), p. 141.

the external observer of things Scottish. All references—however oblique—to the more vulgar and obtrusive forms of the *weltanschauung* are met with the confident, but slightly embarrassed assertion that Tartanry is now a thing of the past. It is always languishing since yesterday. This is invariably true, in one sense, and totally false in another. The flexibility of Scottish narcissism simply allows transitions from the heather-clad ballad to *Lament for the Great Music*, with any number of stops in between. This is, precisely, the unity and underlying sense of a deeply defensive culture on precarious foundations that are—as Craig put it—felt as shifting under one's feet.

The Politics of Narcissism

Inevitably, Nationalist politics are built upon this web of accreted myth-consciousness. No more striking illustration of this can be found than the common myth of Scottish Left-ness. Claud Cockburn recently fell foul of it in a *New Statesman* article called *The Bagpipes of Socialism*.¹³ There he argued that Mrs Ewing's electoral triumph at Hamilton was not what it seemed, but '... the renewal of a great tradition: the potentially formidable alliance of Scottish socialism and nationalism.'

A really cohesive system of false consciousness like the one we are examining must provide space for socialists as well as everyone else.

Useful as a North Atlantic Cuba would be, the conviction that this is Scotland's destiny rests on particularly shifting ground. Scotland is certainly a more egalitarian country than England, and in some ways a more violent one. It does not follow that she is a more revolutionary one.

Scotland's gritty sense of equality derives from the old Theocracy, not from Jacobinism or Bolshevism. It is double-edged, like every other aspect of that heritage. It stands for the democracy of souls before the All Mighty, rather than an explosive, popular effort to *do* anything. It is extremely touchy, but passive. This passivity is intimately linked to something even more dangerous. According to the rabid forms of Protestantism that got the upper hand in Scotland, the democracy of souls is an uneasy one. Souls may be either saved, or damned, and which way one goes is by far the most important question of life on earth. Regrettably, there is no rational way of resolving the problem, so that argument about it is necessarily sectarian, and endless. The only solution is by fiat, from above, by an Authority that selects the Elect from the ranks of the Damned.¹⁴ Hence, a kind of masochism, a craving for discipline, in fact, accompanies this Scottish sense of equality. Gramsci has pointed out the analogy between Calvinist and vulgar-Marxist determinism. In fact, there was no Stalinist like a Scottish Stalinist, a

¹³ *New Statesman*, February 23rd, 1968.

¹⁴ The prevalence and intensity of the Elect-Damned psychology has a lot to do with the cultural narcissism previously described. The Elect—to which each individual is of course obliged to feel *he* belongs, however he categorizes the Damned—is by definition self-admiring, smug, and identified with the only reality that counts.

truth which must have impressed itself on many students of modern British politics.

Scottish Nationalism is not in the very least inherently 'Left'. It belongs squarely within a category quite familiar in the history of the world outside Scotland: bourgeois nationalism. This is, in fact, implied by the majority of Nationalist propagandists, in their favourite argument: why not Scotland? They compare the case of Scotland to those of the many new nations and nationalities which have emerged since 1945, every one of them blessed with a seat at the United Nations. Surely Scotland's 'claim' is as good as any of theirs?

Claim to *what*? This is the question that the Nationalist myth-mentality appears largely consecrated to evading, with the assistance of all hands.

The right to be free, territorial self-control, even the idea of nationality itself—these are not timeless truths, but the products of a certain logic in the historical process. They occupy a broadly recognizable place in history, and have a certain justification attaching to this place. Once, the world was without nationalities—and indeed, nationality appeared, not as the expression of 'freedom' and the right to be different and unique, but as the enemy of precisely these things, the leveller of tribal and feudal variety—and it will certainly be so again. Nations and Nationalisms are aspects of the bourgeois epoch of world history. Within this epoch it has (or in most cases, has had) two sorts of justification as a historical force. Firstly, as a necessary means of escape from feudal or other primitive systems that were an impossible barrier to economic and social progress. In this sense, Nationalism was a precondition of the formation of modern society, and such a vital one that bourgeois civilization has on the whole remained cast in its mould; it is only now beginning to break away from it. Secondly—mainly in the 20th century—Nationalism has served as an analogous instrument for non-European societies to escape from another system which for them constituted an equally insuperable barrier to development: western Imperialism. It is unnecessary here to try and discuss the complexities of these issues. But surely it is clear that in both cases Nationalism had a double positive function: externally, as a means of sweeping away archaic or predatory social forms, and internally, as a means of mobilizing populations for socio-economic development.

Where is Scottish Nationalism located in this perspective? In its present form, nowhere. That is, as a tragic dream comparable to the other dreams of Scotland's history precisely in its remoteness from those real conditions which could give it the historical significance it implicitly claims. Any reasonable political judgment on Scottish Nationalism must take into account both this remoteness, and its meaning in terms of Scottish history.

True to their nature, the Scots usually voice their Nationalism in a very moral manner. Nowhere more so than in placing themselves within the great 20th-century anti-imperialist movement of national liberation. There can therefore be no harm in pointing out some of the mor

truths which *do*, in fact, attach to the position of their country in the history of the world.

First of all, Scotland is not a colony, a semi-colony, a pseudo-colony, a near-colony, a neo-colony, or any kind of colony of the English. She is a junior but (as these things go) highly successful partner in the general business enterprise of Anglo-Scots Imperialism. Now that this business is evidently on its last legs, it may be quite reasonable for the Scots to want out. But there is really no point in disguising this desire with heroic irony. After all, when the going was good for Imperialism the world heard very little indeed for the Scots' longing for independence. It may not come amiss either to indicate the ludicrous phoniness of that comparison of themselves with the Irish the Scots are fond of in this context. The Irish rose up and wrenched their independence from Imperialism when the latter was at the apex of its power. With sleekit Presbyterian moderation the Scots have restrained themselves until it is abundantly plain that the English would be incapable of stopping an insurrection on the Isle of Wight. The Irish had to fight the Black-and-Tans. The London *Times* has already half-rendered to the Scots.

The comparison between them is not a matter of fifty years in time. It is a matter of two worlds. When, after its own grab at colonial empire had failed with the disastrous Darien Expedition of 1698, the Scottish bourgeoisie joined forces with the English in 1707, the distinction became inevitable. The Scottish people ceased to belong to Frantz Fanon's 'Wretched of the Earth'. For two centuries they have belonged to the conquerors. Their industries were, as E. J. Hobsbawm puts it 'the cutting edge of a world industrial economy'.¹⁵ Their armies were the cutting edge of British Imperialism. Now, the bourgeois rhetoric of Nationalism blandly exorcises this history of blood and exploitation with a few readings from *The Rights of Man*. Indeed, one elder statesman of the Nationalist movement recently went on record with these remarkable words: 'The great mistake made by James VI in 1603 was to go to London. He should have governed the whole British Empire from Scotland . . .'¹⁶ Unfortunately, this vein of delirium echoes the central uncertainty of Nationalism only too accurately. When in doubt take refuge in bombast. The Scots have become vaguely conscious of having sold their national soul to the Devil. It is more painful to recognize that the bargain of 1707 cannot now be undone, except in name—unless of course the Nationalist movement had aspirations which went beyond the terms of that bourgeois world to which 1707 and its consequences belonged. But this is another question, and one of little relevance to existing Nationalism.

Admittedly, Scotland—along with the English North-East and South West—has also long been the victim of the unequal development characteristic of advanced capitalism. Such areas are characterized by higher, chronic rates of unemployment, poorer housing, high emigration, and generally lag behind the favoured zones of growth (like the

¹⁵ E. J. Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

¹⁶ Mr. Douglas Young, quoted in *The Daily Telegraph* (Supplement) February 9th 1968.

English South-East, or the Paris conurbation). It has been recognized that one way—perhaps a necessary way—of countering this tendency is to give more power over their own affairs to these regions. The Italian Republican Constitution of 1946 remains a model for such progressive bourgeois development, although only partially enacted to this day.

But this is to confer upon Scotland's problems a status quite different from the one enshrined in the Nationalist mythology. It makes the purpose of 'independence' into a minor administrative problem. Autonomy becomes an antidote for some of the worst damage done by the reckless past evolution of the capitalist system. Looked at in this perspective, regional Nationalisms could have a usefulness to the system second only to its principal support through times of crisis: the Labour Party. There is some formal analogy between such regional distortions of development within capitalism, and the world problem of 'under-development'; but there is such a difference of scale and quality that it is really absurd to try and read the same political meanings into the two situations.¹⁷

In a capitalist world more unified every day by the great monopolies, Scotland occupies a position of particular dependence. The regional decay resulting from her dependence upon English capitalism has only been remedied (very partially) by the invasion of American capital and its chain of light-engineering plants in the Lowlands. A bourgeois-national movement will create no new, national heaven-and-earth in this situation. It is coming into an old world whose crust hardened long ago. Its task is the anti-climactic one of administering more efficiently and humanely what was created in the past. Nationalism belongs in a young world in eruption, where the collapse of the ancient system releases visionary possibilities of a new social order forged closer to the heart. Scotland's Romantic Nationalism, which slumbered through this era of history, now emerges from its grave like a *revenant* to confront the obsidian landscape of late capitalism. Free, for the Spirit of National Redemption: the post of Local Under-Manager.

It might be objected that there are still anomalous forms of Nationalism with much greater significance than this. The current Nationalist stirrings of Eastern Europe, for instance, or—even more striking—France. We noticed at the beginning that Scottish and Welsh Nationalism do indeed share something of this meaning, at least in their external impact upon their context, as elements of disgregation in the aftermath of British Imperialism. But they appear—so far at least—to be much less important than these other cases. In part, this is simply a matter of context. It is the sclerotic oppression of Stalinism which gives positive and liberating significance to Czech, Polish or Rumanian national movements. It is American capitalism's growing domination of Europe that lends positive historical sense to Gaullist Nationalism.

In part, however, it is also a matter of the character and aspirations of

¹⁷ An interesting study dealing mainly with this question, and with an emphasis very different from the present writer's is *The Revolt against Satellitism in Scotland and Wales*, by Keith Buchanan, *Monthly Review*, March 1968.

the national bourgeoisie or ruling élite behind these national manifestations. After all, the French bourgeoisie, with its revolutionary traditions (however faded), its intense chauvinism and confident way of life and its still great resources of power, is one thing. The Scottish bourgeoisie is decidedly another.

The English have curiously little grasp of this aspect of the question—as if confident that their long dominion over such provinces had necessarily produced complete mimic copies of their own ruling classes there. In Scotland at least, this naïve trust is quite unfounded. Here is one level indeed where a genuine analogy between the British provinces and the most hopeless areas of the ex-colonial Empire holds good. No West African or Asiatic *comprador* bourgeoisie has aped the external forms of English civility more sedulously—or remained more stubbornly itself, underneath them. This is the whole sense of the Calvinist mentality: cringing observance of external forms, for worldly purposes, and contemptuous disregard of them on another level. Inwardly, the Scots have absorbed little or nothing of the peculiar secrets of the English bourgeois régime: hegemony through toleration, compromise, ‘permeation’, the delicious mystification of traditionalism, the translation of impersonal power-relationships into subtle personal terms—all these are really closed books for them. That peculiarly heavy, gritty stylelessness, deaf to allusions and the subtler sorts of humour, that exasperating pedantry and solemn formalism, those allies and disconcerting silences and the clumsy intensity somewhere behind them tensed in relationship to a world felt as tragic and out of key with the ordinary spontaneity of living—these traits so familiar to the foreigner would be, written large, the characteristics of a Scottish bourgeois régime. They reflect that particular subordination to the past described above. They also give a precise sense to the reactionary nature of Scottish Nationalism, and any government it produced.

The preoccupations of this parody of a ruling class are well laid out for us in A. J. C. Kerr’s 1967 *Scottish Opinion Survey*.¹⁸ Robert Burns would be vexed (but hardly surprised) to see that Republicanism is still well beyond its horizons. It is in fact deeply exercised by the difficult choice between Queen Elizabeth the I and II, and her offspring Prince Andrew, as suitable monarchs of the new realm. The real worry is the young folk, however. That odious, grudging tyranny of the older generations over youth which distinguishes Calvinism from civilization will naturally be reinforced after independence. The truly worrying problem, is: how long should National Service be in the new realm? How much of it should be military, how much enforced ‘public service’? This evil mélange of decrepit Presbyterianism and imperialist thuggery, whose spirit may be savoured by a few mornings with the *Edinburgh Scotsman* and a few evenings watching *Scottish Television* appears to be solidly represented in the Scottish National Party. Those impressed by its ‘radicalism’ should turn to a towering portrait of the Scotch bourgeois, written in acid two generations ago:

¹⁸ *Scottish Opinion Survey* (‘A study of educated and responsible Scottish opinions on the case for and against self-government’), conducted and edited by A. J. C. Kerr (William Maclellan, November 1967).

'Hah! I don't understand that; it's damned nonsense!—that was his attitude to life. If "that" had been an utterance of Shakespeare or Napoleon it would have made no difference to John Gourley. It would have been damned nonsense just the same. And he would have told them so, if he had met them. . . . His thickness of wit was never a bar to the success of his irony. For the irony of the ignorant Scot is rarely the outcome of intellectual qualities. It depends on a falsetto voice and the use of a recognized number of catchwords. . . . Not that he was voluble of speech; he wasn't clever enough for lengthy abuse. He said little and his voice was low, but every word . . . was a stab. And often his silence was more withering than any utterance. It struck life like a black frost.'¹⁹

'John Gourlay' is not dead. He surfaces in all his spleen every time anything in the least 'daring' appears at the Edinburgh Festival, and keeps a watchful eye on life during the rest of the year. Nationalism may or may not have this or that radical or progressive side-effect. This rough-hewn sadism—as foreign to the English as anything in New Guinea—will surely be present in whatever junta of corporal-punishers and Kirk-going cheese-parers Mrs. Ewing might preside over one day in Edinburgh.

Hammer and Thistle?

For Socialists in England and elsewhere, the contradictions of Scottish Nationalism are tricky going; but of course the problem isn't insoluble. For Scottish Socialists, these contradictions will be murderous unless they build up their own Nationalism to oppose the SNP and—beyond immediate politics—to come to terms with Scotland's complex cultural inheritance.

From outside its antagonisms, the contradiction appears as between the externally positive effects of Nationalism and its internally reactionary nature. That is, on the one hand it is necessary to support the claims of Nationalism, and to sustain its demand for more power, rather than less (the forms of mild devolution a British Government is likely to offer as a palliative). Not only for the reasons already mentioned—as a blow against the integrity of British Imperialism, and as a destructive factor of change in the reactionary equilibrium of UK politics. But also because it represents some transfer of power to a smaller arena, closer to the grasp of those subject to it—a process with which (in the long run, at least) Socialism must identify itself. On the other hand, it is necessary to distinguish such support from sympathy with the actual forces likely to benefit from it, and illusions about their success. The English Left has enough burdens to bear, without adding confusion over this issue to them.

From within the vice itself, where the problem is what to feel and do, this kind of distinction is largely meaningless. There, the temptation is to resign from the conflict, under the sway of Nationalist rhetoric: forget 'our differences' for the sake of unity, then 'sort them out' after

¹⁹ George Douglas Brown, *The Hours with the Green Shouters* (1908), pp. 23–24.

independence. This would not be lunacy, if there was an independent and combative Scottish Left capable of striking such bargains, instead of those spiritless provincial simulacra of the Labour and Communist Parties that actually exist. As things are, complicity in the pretence that the Nationalist movement and the obtaining of autonomy are 'neutral', a political event is merely suicide.

This study has not dealt with the tired legalistic arguments for independence, re-heated and served up in every Home Rule debate for the past hundred years. Anyone concerned with these fantasies—which keep Nationalist tongues wagging most of the time—will find their history in Sir Reginald Coupland's *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism*, and a good summary of them in H. J. Paton's recent *The Claims of Scotland*.

Nor has it dealt with that other major obsession of the petty-bourgeois mind: the totally Pickwickian 'economic problem' of whether Scotland would be 'viable' and could survive 'on her own'—as if she was some kind of small shopkeeper, in fact, not part of an international economic order. It has concentrated, instead, on certain aspects of Scottish history which may explain the larger depths of feeling, the structural (often half-conscious) attitudes of Nationalist psychology. Indeed, it is in relationship to this inwardness that a Left-wing Nationalism finds its true justification.

Modern Scotland is the product of a history without truth, a sterility where dream is unrelated to character, and both bear little relationship to what happens. Resisting the forces of assimilation with extraordinary strength, the country has retained through its half-life a dream of true existence: that is, of a wholeness expressing its life instead of hiding it, a three-dimensional being freeing the national will and tongue from their secular inhibitions, a realness to startle itself and the watching world.

What is vital to realize is that Nationalism, in its current forms, is not the possible attainment of this redemptive dream, but its ultimate betrayal. It is as out of touch with the real sense of contemporary history as the other delusions from which it has grown uncritically. It represents in some ways the logical outcome of Scotland's history: but precisely, the dénouement of a tragic half-history must itself be tragic.

The only possible sane reaction to the dilemma is a Socialist Nationalism, whose dream has dimensions which really correspond to those of the stubborn, visionary drive towards identity we have been considering—and which is a part of living contemporary history and of an arising future—not a stale memory of bourgeois nationality, to enshrine all the other stale memories the country has lived off for so long. It goes without saying that such a Nationalism must exist by sharply combatting the overpowering past which conventional Nationalism drools over, that it must see cultural liberation from Scotland's pervasive myths as a precondition of political action, and that it must utterly condemn the kind of garrulous, narcissistic windbagery to which the intelligentsia has so often resorted—in the absence of any-

thing better—as its special contribution to the problem.²⁰ It is simply not possible to escape from the provincialism the Scots fear so much in any other way. The SNP Nationalists are merely lumpen-provincials whose parochialism finds its adequate expression in the asinine idea that a bourgeois parliament and an army will rescue the country from provincialism; as if half of Europe did not testify to the contrary. Is it really impossible that Scotland, which has dwelt so long and so hopelessly on the idea of a nation, should produce a liberated and revolutionary Nationalism worthy of the name and the times?

²⁰ How acute this problem is may be inferred from the fact that the great author of *A Drunk Man and Lessons for the Great Masses* was recently quoted (from the heights of his well-known command of Gaelic and Lallans) as declaring: 'I won't have any English traditions imposed on Scotland. I don't even like the English language—it's a flabby affair too full of synonyms, a language for lazy and ineffect people.' *The Daily Telegraph* (Supplement), February 9th, 1968.

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Credo of the Labour Left

What was your original political formation? What special influences were at work?

I was brought up in a liberal family, but when I went to Oxford in the year 1931 everybody was naturally obsessed with the whole economic crisis of the time and the student population was travelling fast leftwards. I didn't travel so fast then, but immediately I left Oxford I went to work in Liverpool and it was my first intimate sight of industrial England. It was there that I joined the Labour party. I joined the Left of the Party right from the beginning and I've stayed there ever since.

I fought the 1935 Election as a candidate in Monmouth, which was a hopeless seat, and I came up to London afterwards to try to become a journalist. I'd been working in a shipping firm in Liverpool, but when I came to London the dominant issue was the mass unemployment throughout the country. Very soon

everything was swamped by the Spanish Civil War—I had an orthodox thirties in that sense.

What about intellectual influences on your political development?

Of all the socialist journalists that influenced me, I think that H. N. Brailsford had the most powerful effect. I think he was the best of all the socialist journalists writing at the time, and I still think he's the best socialist journalist of the century. *Property or Peace* was the title of a book that he wrote in about 1935. I went and read most of the books that he'd written earlier, and when he'd been Editor of the *New Leader*, and I got to know him somewhat, and so he had a very considerable influence upon me. I read Hazlitt a great deal (inspired by my father) and though I don't suppose Hazlitt could be described as a socialist, I think that his outlook on politics was the right one. He still has a considerable influence on what I believe. Later when I came to London I started reading Marx and the orthodox socialist classics—I read Karl Marx with Barbara Castle, and I hope we both derived benefit from it. I then went to work on *Tribune* when it was founded in 1937. William Mellor was the Editor, Brailsford, Bevan, and Cripps were the people who ran it, and I learned a considerable amount from their attitudes.

What was your formative political experience?

The plight of the Labour Party in the thirties. People sometimes forge how deep was the disaster which the Labour Party suffered in 1931. The outward sign of it was the drop in the Labour Party membership in the House of Commons to about 50, but even more spectacular was the collapse in Union membership. At the end of the First World War Union membership was up to about 8 million or more. After 1931 Trade Union membership sank to lower than 4 million. Until just before the outbreak of war, the unions were fighting a rearguard action against wage cuts and the depression of the standard of living of their people and official unions were participating very little in the protection of the unemployed. But the most absorbing activity of the time was the organization of the unemployed, and to a great extent the official trade union movement cut itself off from that. So I think that all that has decisive influence on what I thought afterwards. When the Labour movement in this country is scattered, very serious events follow—the standard of living goes down. Although there have been many awkward moments, and tragic moments, in the period since 1945, there has been nothing comparable to the agony that the Labour movement of this country had to endure after 1931.

How do you view the evolution of the Labour Party since the twenties? How would you differentiate the various Labour Governments since then?

There's nothing much to be said for either the 1924 or the 1929 government. They were pitiful failures, both of them. The 1929 government was a disaster because the Labour movement had nobody in charge who understood the task of trying to control the financial machine. It was a terrible task anyhow, because the blizzard blew across the whole of the Western world, and they would have had to be glan

indeed to stand up to it. But they weren't giants, they were pygmies and they were blown over. The 1945 government started with some considerable advantages as a result of the war because, of course, there was a form of military socialism in operation in this country. It gave the government very considerable powers of control over the price mechanism, the commodity markets, and exchange transactions—and the whole of this apparatus did enable the government to keep a certain mastery over the situation. They made considerable use of it, in my opinion. Of course, the pressures which overthrew that government were partly due to its own deficiencies, no doubt. But it was also due to war weariness, the sheer war-weariness of a people who wanted to escape from politics, and to be free from the pressures of mobilization in the war. British people had been more mobilized than any other people, and they didn't like it. They wanted that to be reversed to a considerable extent. So popular pressures mounted against the government. The most significant event of the 1950's, now looking back at it, was the dismantlement of the whole apparatus of control over capitalism in this country. A very considerable part of the power that had accumulated in the state—was distributed back again to capitalist organizations. The power of the City of London, the freedom of commodity markets, private disposal of capital—all this was restored by the Tories, of course deliberately and very naturally—that was what they were there for. When the Labour government came into power in 1964, they should have re-established this apparatus, in particular the exchange controls. There was an excuse for governing from hand to mouth between 1964 and 1966 because the government had to design matters in order to win a majority, and they did that successfully. But they comforted themselves that they could continue with that kind of consensus policy, and indeed the whole consensus idea had become even more deeply ingrained within them than it was before. It was between March 1966 and June 1966 that the government eventually collapsed into accepting the full deflationary policy. This was an acknowledgement of defeat. Then, when they introduced the July measures, they accepted international financial doctrine. All the efforts they had made to get beyond orthodoxy were abandoned. The great opportunity of this government was lost, when they got the majority of 100 in 1966. That was the moment when the government should have taken steps to show who was the master in its own house, and instead of doing that it travelled in the opposite direction.

Surely this decision in mid-1966 is hardly something that will surprise the future historian of the Labour Party, since the latter has always accepted capitalist economic orthodoxy? It has never made any attempt to forge a socialist programme—there are bits of its legislation which seem to have some socialist meaning, usually imposed on it by the rank and file, but which are never the product of the leadership itself. Haven't Labour governments always behaved in the way the Wilson régime behaved in the middle of 1966?

Well, historians to start with are never surprised. They always think that things turn out inevitably, and that therefore they can explain them. But in my opinion there was a good reason for surprise and indeed for criticism on the grounds that even within the framework of the Labour Party's reformist tradition they could have taken different

steps once they'd got the majority. The government could have attempted to carry out the programme that they had fought the two elections on—which were expansionist programmes, repudiating the orthodox doctrine in many important aspects. Although these were not full-blooded socialist programmes at all—I acknowledge that at once—I think they were radical, expansionist programmes and I think they should have applied them.

Why do you think that they didn't?

I suppose the fundamental answer is that the leadership and the Party had not prepared itself properly for the task. If you ask the reasons for this—partly it's because of the deep-seated distaste for any theoretical discussion inside the Labour Party and the Labour movement in previous years which might have enabled us to learn the lessons of the three previous Labour governments. Also, no doubt, the period between 1964 and 1966, when the government survived successfully in electoral terms, led Harold Wilson and the other leaders of the government to think that they didn't have to make any fundamental changes in order to be able to continue governing. Some people say to us—that is to left-wing mps—The government are traitors, therefore you ought to destroy them. Of course, if they are traitors to the working class and to the Labour movement, no doubt they should be destroyed. The government should be torn down. But that is not what my constituents believe. The Management Committee of my party have wanted us to do everything in our power to persuade or urge the Labour Party to take a different course, but they have never wanted us to tear the Labour Party to pieces. This is the perpetual dilemma of people on the Left of the party—Aneurin Bevan experienced it in the fullest measure.

If the Labour government appears to be destroyed by the actions of the Left, even though you can argue with great conviction and plausibility that the true cause of the government's destruction is its own folly and its own crime, then for years—perhaps generations—there would be bitter sectarian arguments in the Labour movement as to who was responsible. I think that would be futile. If the government is destroyed I want to see the Labour movement taken over by those who have drawn the proper conclusions from the failure of this government. I do not think that that would be assisted by any doubts as to where the responsibilities for the ~~discoment~~ lay.

Moreover mps, after all, represent the people, and they rightly have to take into account the views of those who send them there—particularly the views of the Labour people who select them, work for them, and get them into the House of Commons. Therefore, I don't believe the left mps have misinterpreted the feeling in the country; I think they've interpreted it correctly. They haven't succeeded in persuading the government to take a different course, although they may have influenced the course which the government has taken, in matters of degree and in matters of importance, eventually. They must continue with that process.

What sort of things are you thinking of, where you feel that the Left has had any effect in this present parliament?

It has had some influence in arguing and campaigning for changes which eventually the government has been forced to accept. Not solely because of our arguments, of course—but our arguments have anticipated the facts of the case. If you take the East of Suez problem from 1964 until 1966, the leadership of the government, in particular Harold Wilson and Healey, were strongly in favour of sustaining Britain's position East of Suez, and it was one of the main arguments we had with them. Now they have made a fundamental change in British policy there. Although we unfortunately don't get the economic benefits of it yet for some time, there's no doubt that this is a fundamental change. Of course it's a change enforced on Britain by economic circumstances, but very often the function of left-wing people is to point out in advance of other people what are the economic facts of the case. That's one example. Then the pressure exerted from the Left has undoubtedly limited the amount of expenditure on arms, although it hasn't cut it to anything like the degree that we would like to see. There are other aspects of policy on which it has had a marginal influence. I don't want to state it very highly—I wouldn't deny for a second that we're very disappointed at the lack of greater influence on the government. Just let me go on to say, though, that the government, apart from anything that the left MPs may do, may destroy itself. Many people, I suppose, would say that that's the likely thing to happen. If that is to occur, then the duty of socialists in my opinion would be to rebuild the Labour movement. That's one of the reasons why I do not want the Left of the party to be responsible for pulling the government down, because that would provide them with an alibi. But I cannot think it's a sensible course to suggest that the way to rebuild a Labour movement is to try and build a rival party.

Is there any absolute line beyond which you would not go on supporting the government? Many demands have been made on the loyalty of Left Labour MPs over the years, naturally. Have you ever at any time thought there might be a moment at which you could no longer provide that loyalty?

Our loyalty is not regarded so highly by the leaders of the party. But I don't think you can put it in hypothetical circumstances. Of course if the government took certain actions, we would oppose them to the point of pulling down the government. I can think of many—for example, if they decided to send troops to Vietnam.

We must seek to use our pressures to persuade the government to change course. The major issue that confronts the Parliamentary Labour Party in domestic politics at the present time is the whole question of the prices and incomes bill, and many of us have made it clear to the government that we will not vote for its prices and incomes legislation. We have said that partly in order to influence their policy—although our hopes of doing so are receding—but partly to make it clear to them that on that issue they cannot count on our support, and it could be that the government will be defeated on it. Personally, I believe that even if they were defeated they would not accept it as a vote of no

confidence—but they certainly would be very much weakened. We have to take into account the consequences of that too. But the link between members of parliament and the trade unions outside is essential to the Labour movement—one of the most serious aspects of the government's policy is that it has greatly injured that link.

In the late fifties, the Labour Left seemed to accept as its leaders people like Wilson, Greenwood, Crossman, and Castle—many of those who, in fact, constitute the present government. The former Left of the Labour Party became, for various historical reasons, the leadership of the Labour Party and actually the driving force within the government we've had since 1964. Yet the experience of this government has been if anything worse than the experience of previous Labour governments. How do you explain this paradox?

Well, I don't believe that the position of the left-wing members of the cabinet has been anything like as strong as people have thought. One of Wilson's major errors was to give dominant positions to the right wing of the party. I think the reason why he did this is that he's seen the strength of the Right of the party, and thought that he must take very special measures to appease them.

As for the left-wing members of the cabinet, I don't want to discuss them individually, but most of the achievements of the government are due to them. Barbara Castle's Transport Bill is a good measure, and if she'd been appointed Minister of Transport earlier, I think we would have felt some of the advantages of it. She has made some effort towards a co-ordinated transport system in this country, which is after all what the government was pledged to try to secure.

The same Minister is implementing that aspect of the government's domestic policy that socialists most absolutely oppose—the attack on the industrial organizations of the working class and the attempt to force an incomes policy on the trade union movement.

I think she's profoundly wrong in the attitude she takes about it. I don't think the trade unions will stand for it, and I don't think they should stand for it. But I was referring to the previous achievements. If you take Dick Crossman, I think his achievement in this government is quite considerable. It was largely his pressure inside the Cabinet that was responsible for the abandonment of the East of Suez and Middle East policy. He has started to make some reform of Parliament, and he's the first Leader of the House who has attempted to do so for generations. He's got into a lot of trouble about it, but the reforms he has made have been quite considerable and have helped to make the place considerably more effective.

We now have a very long history of the Labour Party, but it has never really shown any sign of wanting to transform the society that it inhabits. It has been quite reluctant to impose on this society changes which the capitalist system itself requires. To a large extent it was obviously better for British capitalism pull out of its imperial involvements East of Suez, and yet the Labour Government introduced these changes very reluctantly and tardily. Only when 500,000 Indonesian communists died and Malaysia became 'safe' was it willing to do

Such an organization is an extremely unlikely instrument ever to install socialism. If British workers are going to transform their society, surely they are going to forge other instruments to do this. Doesn't the whole history of the Labour Party teach us that it must be quite inappropriate to any task of this nature?

The achievements of the British Labour movement over the past 50 years are in my opinion considerable. The 1945 government helped to alter the balance in our society and to alter the form of our society. They didn't transform it, or make it a new society—of course not. Nobody claims that. But it is necessary to take into account that Britain occupies a special position within international capitalism. This is partly because of its dependence on international trade, which obviously makes it much more difficult for us to carry through a purely national change; but even more important in the past 20 or 30 years has been the dependence of British capitalism on American capitalism.

This enormously multiplies the difficulty of a Labour Government. The 1945 government started with a crisis with the us over lend-lease, and collapsed in 1951 in another crisis with American capitalism over the us demand for a British re-armament programme during the Korean War. In the same way, the whole of this government's record since 1964 has been bound up with the crises in American capitalism.

How do you conceive the evolution of modern capitalism?

I think Strachey's account of what has occurred in modern capitalism is correct. Keynesian economics plus democratic pressures have, in fact, greatly improved the standard of life for the majority of people. Strachey did not provide a satisfactory programme for the future, but I think that his account of what has happened to modern capitalism is much more accurate than what I suppose might be regarded as an orthodox Marxist account.

Living standards have risen more in other capitalist countries which have much weaker Labour movements, and which have often not even had a social-democratic government. Some rise in the living standards of the working class is functional for contemporary capitalism. A reformist Labour Party is not a precondition of this.

Strachey does not say it is only the pressure of the trade unions and the democratic Labour movements that produced the changes of the last decades. Keynesian economics had a very beneficial effect in enabling people to escape from the previous orthodox economic strait-jacket. It's foolish to under-rate the economic consequences of Keynesian techniques. But the demands of the Labour movement have been crucial. The United States hasn't a Labour movement of the same nature as ours, but they've got extremely strong trade unions in many fields, and the biggest advances in the standards of life of the working people in the United States have been made, I would have thought, where the unions are strongest. Indeed one of the major criticisms of the way in which us society has developed is that it's only been in the fields where the unions have been able to fight most strongly that they've been able to get spectacular advances. There's been a whole big

section of the country that has been left out of this prosperity. Whereas in this country, although there are still sections left behind, this doesn't alter the fact that the standard of life of the mass of people over the past 30 or 40 years has greatly improved. One of the agencies that has contributed to this has been the existence of a Labour movement and a Labour Party. Universal suffrage is a very powerful instrument. It compels the capitalist parties to compete for the favour of the public and that is a great alteration in the situation. It's certainly a major change from anything that was conceived by Marx, because there was hardly any such institution as universal suffrage in his day. I think the whole effect of universal suffrage upon the way in which the economic system is run has been greatly under-rated by many, and that's why I think that Strachey's thesis is generally correct. Nobody can deny that the Labour Party has not succeeded in securing the transfer of economic power on the scale that socialists should demand. But that doesn't alter the fact that the existence of a Labour movement has greatly assisted in improving the standard of life of the people of this country. It has enabled them to set their sights higher. I don't believe you can estimate the successes of the Labour movement of this country or of the Labour Party by what it has achieved in government. Thank heavens! If that were to be the estimate it would be a severe indictment. But the existence of the Labour movement itself is of paramount importance.

These reformist achievements of the Labour Party are surely not outstanding in any international perspective? Capitalism has often reformed itself better than social-democracy. Historically, social democracy was characterized by two traits. First social democratic parties formally had the aim of instituting a socialist society but by reformist methods. Their overall aim was change—to remove capitalism and replace it in some way with socialism—but they believed in a very gradualist implementation of this programme. The second feature of many social democratic parties was that they enlisted the support of a great proportion of the working class. This definition of a social democratic party no longer seems to fit the Labour Party—if it ever did. On the one hand the Labour Party seems to be in the process of being deserted by the proletariat—both the organized support of the trade unions and also the support of the working-class electorate. At the same time, the Labour Party is obviously not reforming towards socialism. It is reforming, not very successfully, towards a stronger capitalism.

There are several trends in the Labour Party that point in the direction you indicate, and I think they should be strongly resisted. First of all on the question of reforming society. There is a powerful element in the Labour Party which merely looks on it as the alternative form of government in this country. That is a strong element in the party—the growing element—and, of course, when the party was successful in 1964 and 1966, it attracted a large number of careerists to the bandwagon. I think that here is a danger to be resisted, and I believe the most powerful way of resisting it is for socialists to restate in modern and effective terms what are the aims of reform and what is the kind of society in which they believe. As to the other question—if you take the by-elections or the argument between the government and the trade unions on prices and incomes policy, no doubt what you say is correct. But I still think that the Labour Party and the Labour movement

this country have a chance of winning and keeping the support of the mass of the working people in this country better than any other rival organization that anybody might attempt to establish, because of their historic achievements. Take for example housing in this country, which in many respects is nothing comparable to what it should be, but compared with conditions before the war it has immeasurably improved.

It is much worse than West Germany, which builds far more houses for its population although it has not had a social-democratic government in power since the war.

I don't accept that. I accept that many parts of capitalist West Germany were smashed by the bombs, which may have been of assistance to them. But if you take this country, the transfer of resources from private speculative building to public ownership, and municipal building, is enormous compared with before the war. Therefore I say that any socialist who studies the Labour movement, will see that it is the only organization that is likely to advance the cause of the mass of the workers here. I think that our history points that way, and it's the inspiration that helps us to sustain the movement. So, although I agree that in recent weeks and months there have been signs of workers refusing to vote for the Labour Party because of their disgust with the government, I believe that that is only a temporary affair. We should do all in our power to ensure that it is only a temporary affair, because the effect of such a mass desertion of the Labour Party by the working class of this country would not produce an alternative party. It would be much more likely to lead to a kind of nihilism or fascism even, leaving the way open for a stupendous right-wing reaction. This is very likely to happen in this country if we allow the Labour movement to be gravely weakened.

Many young people feel no loyalty to the Labour Party now. They have not been brought up to believe in the logic of a perpetual important presence of the Left within a party capable of endorsing the Vietnamese War, capitulating to Rhodesian racism, and attacking working-class organizations in Britain.

I don't deny for a moment the revulsion of students and other young people—some of the most intelligent and active sections of the community—against the government. I can see many good reasons for it, although I don't agree with the deductions that they've drawn.

To many young people it seems that the enemy has got a vice-like grip on the Labour Party; if they want to engage with that enemy, they must first leave the organizations it controls, and secondly not choose Westminster as their battle ground.

I'm not saying that anyone should choose only Westminster as a battle ground—God forbid. Westminster would be an absolutely fruitless place if there weren't battles going on outside. In my book on Aneurin Bevan I described his constant effort to make an association between what happened in parliament and what happened outside. No Left MP can be effective if there are no mass movements outside.

But the mass movements of Bevan's day were above all opposed to Conservative

governments—not Labour governments carrying out capitalist policies. Today the opposition is actually to the Labour Party and the Labour government. The Vietnam demonstrators in Grosvenor Square were young people demonstrating against a Labour government. Scottish workers who vote for the Nationalist Party in Scotland are in a different way trying to get away from the old system. Even those large numbers of traditionally Labour working-class voters in England who are now abstaining in the by-elections are perhaps voicing in the only way open to them that the old system doesn't any longer express their desires.

You say the old system. I don't know what is the new system. If you say there should be a new political party, the proposition becomes to form a rival party against the Labour Party. Then you will have to spend the next 20 or 30 years fighting for a position inside the Labour movement and the whole of the attack will be directed at the Labour Party itself. Now, many of the most active people who have not made the choice to go on to form another party will have to spend most of their time resisting that. In my opinion, this is a perspective of 20 or 30 years of internal civil war in the Labour movement, and personally I don't believe it is the best way forward. I believe it's much more sensible for the active left-wing element to stay in the Labour party, or to come back into it, and to say: How can we take it over?

Yet the Left has been trying to take over the Labour Party for a very long time. Much of the time what happens is that it seems to operate as a safety valve of socialist sentiment within it. It thus fosters a pseudo-conflict, which prevents the real conflicts against capitalist policies and capitalist ideas ever coming on into the open. Young militants ask themselves today whether a struggle against the Labour Party as it is might not eventually be an unavoidable form which the struggle for socialism must take at a time when the Labour government is actually the executor of British capitalism.

What would any new party's policy be on the issue of democracy, or parliamentary government? Are they in favour of it or are they against it? They will have to say whether they are. I think it's absurd for us to think of abandoning the methods of democracy at a time when many of the communist countries are groping their way back to try and discover some democratic methods. I presume it would be a democratic party and I support some form of parliamentary government. Certainly every alternative I've seen proposed is a much longer route to the objective of socialist power than even the long one I have been discussing.

You've been a member of parliament for a long time. How does this institution strike you as an expression of democratic government?

Parliament? I think parliament can be used extremely effectively for socialist purposes if we want. I don't believe it's the constitution or parliament that is defective, I think it's the determination of the leaders and the Labour Party itself to take over other institutions and bring them under the control of the elected parliament that is lacking. I think the elected parliament has many virtues because it can be used to mobilize the power of universal suffrage against the minority power of property ownership.

Is it an accident that it has never done so?

Well, it isn't an accident—it hasn't been at the job all that long. For about 40 or 50 years there's been universal suffrage in this country—not such a huge time in the history of the world. It hasn't succeeded yet, but people haven't succeeded by other means either. Establishing democratic socialism is an extremely difficult operation.

You don't think there are really qualitative improvements needed in the parliamentary democracy we have in Britain at the moment?

I think there are many ways in which the whole thing could be speeded up and made more effective—although it isn't the lack of speed which is such a difficulty if you've got the will. In times of war, parliament was made to move extremely swiftly. But parliament even in time of war provided a protection against many of the abuses we've seen in other countries. The horrors I've seen in my lifetime, when people tried to achieve fundamental changes in society by some other means, were very often perpetrated in conditions of absolute secrecy. It is much more difficult for such things to happen under a parliamentary system.

But in the experience of our generation this is a little more difficult to confirm. In the last few years what we have seen has been Western democracies—bourgeois democracies of the parliamentary type—waging brutal colonial wars in Algeria, Arabia, Malaya, Kenya and elsewhere. At present the worst war of all—the American aggression in Vietnam—approaches genocide. Yet all these wars have been conducted by parliamentary régimes of the western type, and there doesn't seem to have been any inherent incompatibility.

I'm not saying that democratic régimes haven't been guilty of terrible crimes as well. They have. But that doesn't defeat my argument. Indeed if you take the present events in the United States of America—they confirm my view. Because if the Americans escape from the war in which they are so deeply engaged, it will be largely because of the democratic processes in the United States of America. If America had been a completely totalitarian country it would have been very much more difficult for a retreat to have been found. So I think that the American democratic process is vindicated. In Britain on the whole it's a better system and it operates more swiftly. Under our parliamentary system no British government could ever have been committed to the Vietnam war by the device used in America—the resolution of the Gulf of Tonkin. I think that the British parliamentary methods are more flexible and more usable by democracy to prevent such things happening.

A Labour Government fought against the national liberation movement in South Yemen for nearly four years.

When the Labour Government came in, it had to extricate itself from the agreement made by its predecessors, then it had to fix a timetable for getting out, and then it had to deal with a bitter quarrel between two sections of the liberation movement in Aden. Anyone who

thinks that it was simple to make the choice between the two quite wrong. Indeed if the British government had opted for the more powerful movement in Aden a few months earlier, it would probably have chosen those who were most closely associated with Egypt—which would have been a mistake. It was an extremely difficult choice. Extricating a country from its imperialist past is a very difficult process.

The Labour Government's record on foreign policy has not been a wrong. For instance, it's absurd for us to discuss what's happening in the world today without paying paramount attention to the existence of weapons of planetary destruction which are the most important development in world history—the fact that the world can blow itself to pieces. Now, nobody has the right to commit nuclear war. No one has the right to put the demands of their own state above those of humanity. That should be a platitude, but it isn't. I'm very critical of things that have happened in Russia recently—the suppression of the writers and the rest—but the Russians have shown themselves extremely statesmanlike on the issue of nuclear weapons. They appreciated the problem much more than many other leaders, certainly much more than the Chinese leaders. All these statesmen must be taught to make their individual interests subordinate to the international interest. That does mean a return to some of the ideas of strengthening the United Nations. The Labour Party have developed these more than anyone else in the world. I'm deeply critical of many aspects of the Labour Government over recent years, but we must also take into account that during some crises the Labour Government behaved in much more civilized manner than the other countries of the world, particularly at the time of the Israeli-Arab war. The British government was almost the only disinterested government in the world which sought to try and stop the war from taking place. If the British government had taken that sort of action on Vietnam, then indeed we might have played a big part in getting the United Nations' authority established in Asia. And it is essential that we should. That is one of the paramount strands in the Labour movement's history, and it becomes more and more evident now how important it is.

I wonder if we could return to your comments on the United States. The US suffered a stunning military defeat in Vietnam. It has been outfought and outgeneralled. The victories of the Vietnamese are the over-riding cause of withdrawal symptoms in the White House. But the American anti-war movement has certainly been very important. Surely the whole point about this is that it has developed only because a very strong movement existed right outside normal channels of politics—indeed of necessity against them?

I am not casting any aspersions on the movements that class themselves as being outside the orthodox institutions of politics altogether—many cases they contribute very much to what happens inside politics. In my lifetime, I've often been a very strong supporter of them—such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. But in order to transform such movements into effective action you have to bring influence to bear on the government of the day—this applies to the United States now. But if it were solely left to the operation of the big corporations

Wall Street, it would be much more difficult to make the transformation. That is how democracy operates.

Surely after such a devastating toll in human life and misery, it is evident that American imperialism is the central issue?

There are a lot of combinations of factors that have caused the war in Vietnam. It was not the fault of American democratic institutions, although it did happen under democratic or semi-democratic institutions. All I'm arguing is that if the world is to escape from the horror of Vietnam, it will be partly because in the United States people at home have the opportunity of expressing their points of view.

But it is often argued that the internal structure of the present Labour Party is precisely a negation of democratic principles. The oligarchic domination of the party, and the flouting of Conference decisions, are surely notorious?

It is only in very recent years that majorities for left-wing causes have been won at Labour Party conferences. For most of my political life from, say, 1934 onwards until about 1960, the right-wing majority in the Labour Party controlled the party conferences. There were a few exceptions, but very, very few. The trade union leadership was in a cabal, in alliance with the Labour Party leadership, and they could impose their will upon the Conference, so many of us spent a large part of our political lives fighting against some of the Conference decisions and claiming that those decisions were themselves undemocratic. Therefore when people ask today: don't you want a system where every decision should be made by the Labour Party Conference, and the Labour Party Conference can dictate its will to members in parliament? —I am not so enamoured of it. For the Labour Party Conference can become more of an oligarchy than any expression of democracy in the Labour Party. There should be an alteration of voting power inside the Conference to give the constituencies, which are of course much more directly democratic, predominance over the trade unions at the Conference. Indeed, I think that the trade union representation should be through the constituency organizations. If you said, all power should reside with the Party Conference, then you would reduce members of parliament, who are also answerable to the management committees who selected them and helped to elect them, to puppets, and I don't think that would be a healthy state of affairs. On the other hand you cannot raise the Parliamentary Party to have all the power in the Labour Party because that would subordinate the Conference altogether, and would deprive those who vote through the Conference of their ability to influence the party. There is a problem in the situation which is not soluble by any simple constitutional device such as having the power distributed partly through the Conference, partly by the Parliamentary Labour Party, and partly through the individual MPs. But I don't think that distribution of power is such a bad thing, as long as each is not captured by the other institutions.

So you think that the Labour Party, though not ideal in its internal democracy, is actually as close to this as practicable?

No, it needs the kind of reforms I've been discussing. I'm not for moment arguing that the present structure of the Labour Party is perfectly democratic machine—I think it ought to be made much more democratic—but I'm against repudiating the idea of representative government, because we have not yet succeeded with ours.

What renovation do you think is possible within the Labour Party today?

The most hopeful phenomenon in the party is the development of greater independence in many of the trade unions, and strengthening of their political activities. I believe that can revive the Labour movement and will revive it. Whether it revives it before an election or after a election is a different question, but I believe that's the way in which it can be done. There was a time when I had more doubts about these propositions than I have now—In the thirties many of us were, of course, strongly tempted to join the Communist Party. The Communist Party had many attractions to us in the thirties—to the people of the wage. Partly because they were much more active than the official Labour Party in fighting for the unemployed. Most of the hunger marches were organized by the Communists. Then there was Spain. But I agree with what Silone said in his book called *The School for Dictators*, which influenced me very much in the thirties. Silone wrote it soon after he left the Communist Party in Italy. He explained the reasons why a socialist cannot accept Communist methods of establishing a socialist society, and why he thinks that it will always turn into something that is quite different. Yet he refused to abandon the idea of making a socialist and democratic society possible by revolutionary means of one form or another. The temptation to become disillusioned by democratic methods was much greater in the thirties than it is now despite all the things that have happened in the past two or three years.

Since the thirties, of course, a very large number of people, perhaps one quarter mankind, have actually come under Communist government. Today it seems probable that this will happen in South Vietnam too. Many people, will this as a liberation. What is your attitude?

If I'd been in China in the thirties or the forties or the fifties, I would have become a Communist. I think the only hope for Vietnam today is a victory of the National Liberation Front and the Communist forces allied there. They will make a better society for the Vietnamese, so long as they're not interfered with from outside. It would be a terrible tragedy if, after having got rid of the French and the Americans, they were interfered with by anybody else. But if they're allowed freedom to make their own kind of communist society—that's the best prospect for the people of Vietnam. The people of Asia must decide their future for themselves. But our Western societies which have different institutions must not lose the democracy we have. Ultimately the people in Vietnam and the people in China and the people in the Soviet Union will be more and more clamouring for democratic institutions of one form or another. I don't mean they'll be clamouring for parliamentary institutions on our model, but they will be clamouring for forms of freedom with which they are able to throw off any new tyrannies. Of course they will.

Do you think that Western Communism is inherently antagonistic to democratic forms of society?

I think that if the Italian Communist Party gained power today in association with some of the socialists there, they would build a very different form of Communism from the model current, in say, 1945. Then they would have built it on the Russian model, which I think is now going out. I don't believe that any Communist State in the future is going to try and repeat the Russian model. In Russia itself people want to transform their form of Communism—I don't mean they want to overthrow it, but they obviously want freedom of expression and civil liberties, and the basic freedom to control the apparatus of the state.

Given these changes within European Communism, are you willing to co-operate politically with Communists? In the context of British politics, what is your attitude to forms of political co-operation with the British Communist Party?

Personally, I think the Communist Party has been going through a transformation inside itself and I wish them the best of luck with it. There are many people inside the Communist Party who can play a big part in winning socialism in this country. I don't believe in any formal unity between the Communists and the Labour Party at all—that would raise a constitutional argument which would just play into the hands of the right wing of the party. But so far as co-operation with many Communists—individual Communists—goes, I'm for it. We do it in the trade unions, in many cases. Some of the best trade union leaders in this country over the past 30 or 40 years have been Communists, let's acknowledge the fact. Will Paynter, in my opinion, is one of the best trade union leaders in this country at the present time—the best in fighting for the interests of his own people in extremely difficult circumstances. The idea of suggesting we shouldn't co-operate with people like him would be absurd.

Do you have any theoretical criticisms of the Labour Party?

One of the weaknesses of the Labour movement and the Labour Party in this country has been undue concentration on economics. The government, of course, has been absolutely obsessed by the balance of payments problem, and no doubt it was inevitable that this should govern many of their actions. But it would be a terrible curse for the Labour movement, and would destroy its vitality, were it to allow economics to capture its main thinking. There was once an argument between Lamb and Hazlitt and some others about Newton's science. Someone said that Newton's scientific discoveries had interfered with the beauty of the rainbow. Lamb, who was rather drunk by the end of the evening, got up and moved a toast: 'Confusion to Mathematics'. I think we should move a toast: 'Confusion to Economics'. The strength of the Labour movement was that it aimed to subordinate economics. The way in which people live together, the way in which decent communities are established, is not merely a question of improving people's economic standards. It involves a whole different attitude to the relationship between human beings. This is what the Labour Party preached, and it's one of our deficiencies that we haven't

recently had many people who speak or write of this. Today, I think there must be a restatement of socialist philosophy which puts economics in the background.

The Left in the English Labour movement has often been prolific in its moral denunciation of society. It has been much less productive in ideas about how to change it. Perhaps it has been happier in the traditional role of dissent and protest than in that of transforming capitalism.

It's wrong to distinguish between moral protest and effective ideas. I don't think there's a conflict between the two—indeed those who have made themselves effective in action have, in fact, been those who were inspired by a kind of moral impetus. Socialism is the affirmation of a community in which moral values take a pride of place over the pressures of economics.

The danger is that a moral language somehow assumes that the community already exists. It implies that there are universal values within the society and that leaders can be morally exhorted to reform themselves.

I agree that it's very dangerous to think that rulers can be made to convert themselves—that would be a sort of political Buchmanism. But in order to make socialism we've got to make socialists, and a lot of the preparation for changing society must be made by people who want to show what socialism is in practice.

Are you ever troubled by the thought that possibly your function as a Left MP is really just to give people the illusion that there is some sort of struggle for socialism within the Labour Party? Do you ever worry that maybe you're tempting people into a trap, into what can only be the graveyard of any hope for socialist change?

No, I don't stay awake at nights about that. I try to say to people, both in my constituency and elsewhere, what I think at the particular time. Many times I've made a wrong estimate of the situation or the wrong judgment on what's going to happen, but I always say to people what I think at the particular time on the basis of the evidence I've got.

But if you were right about all these small things, yet wrong about the big thing namely that the Labour Party is the proper vehicle of socialism in Britain, the there might be a very great deal of confusion created even by your correctness on individual issues—opposition to the incomes policy, or the war in Vietnam?

I'm convinced that, as far ahead as I can see, the Labour Party associated with the Labour movement—the Labour movement is a somewhat larger idea than the Labour Party itself, but the two are inextricable—the institution which is going to command the loyalty of the mass of the working people in this country; therefore it is the institution by which change can be produced in Britain. If you want effective change then that is the institution that has got to be influenced. This is fundamental part of my political faith, and everything I know about politics, everything I've seen, persuades me of it.

Interviewers R. B. & A. C

Introduction to Glucksmann

Engels was a military historian; in August 1917 Lenin took Clausewitz's *On War* with him into hiding; Mao Tse-tung and Vo Nguyen Giap are famed for their military writings. But in the twentieth century West, Marxists have largely ignored military strategy, and have remained obstinately oblivious of recent developments and extensions of strategic theory, particularly in the USA. This is doubly surprising. From Machiavelli onwards, social theory and philosophy in general in the West has always regarded war as one of its major themes. Moreover strategy, established as a true science by Carl von Clausewitz, is a product of the same generation of German thinkers as the Hegelian philosophy from which Marxism began. But there is another cause for surprise, recently underlined by André Glucksmann in his book *Le Discours de la Guerre*: 'War is doubly important, 1. through the place it occupies in reality: it is the "highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, or political groups" (Mao Tse-tung); 2. through its intelligibility; as forces do not confront one another blindly in it, there is an understanding of war which provides the theory of struggle (contradiction) in general with valuable examples' (p.295).

André Glucksmann's book, of which the following article is a chapter, fills this gap. Not only does it discuss the two main modern developments of strategy, the nuclear strategy of American authors such as Kahn and Schelling, and Mao Tse-tung's theory of revolutionary war, but it analyses the ideological and theoretical implications of these developments by returning to the founder of modern strategy, Carl von Clausewitz, and the place of war in the philosophy of his great contemporary, Hegel.

The choice of Clausewitz rather than Machiavelli or Vauban is not arbitrary, nor that of Hegel rather than Hobbes or Rousseau. Both

authors' decisive military and political experiences were the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, the first modern State and the first modern war.

Clausewitz drew on existing traditions of military commentary and social philosophy. The philosophers of the Enlightenment regarded the limited wars of the eighteenth century as representing a move towards a rational way to deal with international disputes. Hence Clausewitz's conception of war as a political instrument—war is governed by a political end (*Zweck*). But though war is a continuation of politics, the relation between them is not simply that between means and an end; the political end (*Zweck*) defines a framework within which the military commander decides on a purely military target (*Ziel*), essentially the annihilation of the enemy's forces in a decisive engagement. But the rationalist dream of the advent of 'perpetual peace' was shattered at Valmy, and this failure was brought home by the retreat from Moscow: modern wars would get more bloody and inclusive, not less. So Clausewitz's conclusions flow from the possibility of absolute war; whether a war becomes absolute or not, absolute war as the limit of the 'ascent to extremes' governs all strategic calculation. Any international conflict is potentially an absolute war. Why are all wars not then absolute? Because something limits the ascent to extremes, acts as a 'safety-catch' to it: the supremacy of defence over attack. For this supremacy is both military and political. Militarily, the defensive side has the advantages of easier and more total mobilization, access of supply, command of the terrain, and so on. But it is also the defender who decides politically to what length he is prepared to go—the aggressor would always prefer peaceful submission. These three Clausewitzian principles—politics as a continuation of war, the ascent to extremes, and the supremacy of defence—define and presuppose a homogeneous and continuous space and time in which the decisive engagement of the military campaign can be fought. In the language of modern game theory, they define a soluble matrix of decision for the participants and observers—Clausewitz's strategy is a strategy in the mathematical sense. As such, in its general form it is the only rational strategy possible.

The nuclear strategy of the 1950's and 60's attempts the same rationalization of war in a radically new situation—the situation defined by the possession of nuclear weapons by the great powers. Total war is no longer conceived on the models of the Vendée or Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, nor even Hitler's invasion and defeat in Russia in the Second World War. It is no longer conceived as devastation, but as general annihilation, as the 'doomsday machine'. Nonetheless, Kahn, Schelling and the rest attempt to rebuild a strategic logic while sacrificing some of the Clausewitzian principles. The ascent to extreme survives, renamed the 'ladder of escalation', but defence is no longer supreme, it does not even exist in nuclear war. What then limits the ascent to extremes? Deterrence, fear of total annihilation, answer the strategists. But deterrence cannot provide an autonomous matrix of decision as Clausewitzian strategy did; the crisis, the nuclear strategist's equivalent of the decisive engagement, has neither the continuity in space nor the continuity in time of a traditional military campaign.

The decision as to the political end (*Zweck*) does not define an autonomous area in which military targets (*Ziele*) can be fought for—the crisis is war and politics reduced to one another. The only way to make a strategic decision in nuclear bargaining is on the basis of some mutually accepted convention between the competing parties, a social contract defining the rules of the game. The hot line and the everlasting peace conference, a dialogue in the face of death, where what is said matters less than the fact that something is said—this has been the plan adopted by the older nuclear powers, and, tacitly, by the nuclear strategists. But nuclear strategy is thus only rhetorically a strategy, not scientifically. Clausewitzian strategy remains the only scientific military strategy.

Does the absence of a Clausewitzian strategy for nuclear bargaining mean that nations must enter the nuclear convention if they are to pursue any kind of international policy? The USSR seems to have adopted this course, insisting that the advent of nuclear weapons has decisively altered international strategy. But the Chinese People's Republic has rejected it, insisting that it is the people who decide the fate of the world, not nuclear weapons. This is usually regarded in the West as an example of Chinese rhetoric, if not as criminal adventurism. Glucksmann demonstrates that it is not irrational, but an intrinsic element of Mao Tse-tung's thought.

Mao Tse-tung's classical articles on revolutionary military strategy—'Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War' (1936), 'Problems of Strategy in Guerilla War against Japan' (1938), 'On Protracted War' (1938) and 'Problems of War and Strategy' (1938)—were written before Hiroshima and are analyses of problems foreseen in Clausewitz's most extreme examples of absolute war. Mao Tse-tung accepts the reciprocal nature of strategy, refusing any vulgar Marxist inevitabilism: victory in the revolutionary struggle is only achieved by making the correct strategic decisions in the conflict between the people's army and the opposing forces. For Mao Tse-tung, as for Clausewitz, the 'laws of war' are a game theory 'matrix'. The framework of this matrix is an ascent to extremes, the goal is the annihilation of the enemy's forces. For Mao Tse-tung, too, the defence is decisive, and it must take its most extreme form: the people's protracted war. In the protracted war the continuity of space is the ubiquity of the guerilla and the mobility of its army: the continuity of time is the alternation of defensive and offensive phases within the general, defensive pattern, dividing the enemy in the defensive phase, the more effectively to surround and annihilate him unit by unit in the attack. Neither Mao Tse-tung, nor Vo Nguyen Giap, regards these works as outdated by the advent of nuclear weapons. Mao Tse-tung's first reaction to the nuclear threat was recorded in a famous interview with Anna Louise Strong (August 1946). *Strong*: 'But suppose the United States uses the atom bomb? Suppose the United States bombs the Soviet Union from its bases in Iceland, Okinawa and China?' *Mao*: 'The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the US reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.' This statement is still the essence of the Chinese position. It

has been re-affirmed in the CCP's criticisms of Khrushchev's adventurist nuclear rocket-rattling in Cuba in 1962, and again on the occasion of the explosion of the first Chinese atomic weapon in 1964.

From the view-point of the theorist, or the practitioner, of deterrence, the Chinese attitude may be regarded as reckless, dishonest and reprehensible. But it cannot be considered irrational. The objectivity of the Clausewitzian logic lies in the fact that one party forces on the other a set of possible responses; but the possibility of a strategy of deterrence depends on the opponents agreeing on a conventional set of rules to limit war. The nuclear power has no rational policy faced with an opponent who refuses to speak the deterrent language. The Peoples' Liberation Armies of China and Vietnam have fought Clausewitzian defensive wars for twenty years since the existence of the nuclear threat, with remarkable success; the threat of nuclear intervention has had no effect on their campaigns. Even the adoption of nuclear weapons by the Chinese as an additional and subordinate element in their defensive strategy has not altered their conviction that policy decides on the adoption of weapons, and not *vice versa*.

So the theorists of deterrence can see Chinese strategy as the 'rationality of the irrational'. This 'overlap' of two opposed world outlooks makes possible the confrontation of their strategies. But is the remainder of the CCP's policy the 'irrationality' of the 'rational' part? This is what has generally been believed in the West until now. It is remarkable that the aspect of Mao Tse-tung's thought which has been most appreciated has been his military writings, while his politics and philosophy have been regarded either as inscrutably oriental, or as dogmatic glosses on Lenin and Stalin (even Marxists and Communists have fallen into this trap). Similarly, whereas the wars of liberation in China and Vietnam are comprehensible to us, if unbelievably heroic, the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution have seemed to many voluntarist and chaotic. Glucksmann's book goes beyond the purely military aspects of Mao Tse-tung's thought to examine it as a whole, to contrast the two world outlooks which confront one another in the opposition between Mao Tse-tung's strategy and the theory of nuclear deterrence.

For the rationality of deterrence is not specific to contemporary foreign policy. A dialogue in the face of death is not an idea born in 1945 with the atomic bomb. It is an old theme of European philosophy and for a current of the latter, the bomb was welcomed as a direct manifestation of the truth of society and history according to its world outlook. For this part of his analysis Glucksmann turns to Hegel and his relation to the Enlightenment. For the social philosophers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, and before, the State, too, was rational means to reduce to a minimum the possibility of brutish combat—whether by its authority, as for Hobbes, or by the general will expressed in language and the social contract, as for Rousseau. Hegel stems from this tradition. But the French Revolutionary Terror introduced a new dimension into political thought, and Hegel used as the keystone of his conception of social and world order: 'According to Hegel, the Revolution introduced modern man to the consciousness

of a definitive order; the memory of the Terror generates the deterrent organization of the world, as universal as death, the threat of which now speaks in everything. From this flows a rationalization of social life as well as a way of making war, of assessing the stakes, of preparing the Empire of Reason and world government.' (p. 363). Death as a universal governs the other universals, money, language, power—Rousseau's social contract as well as Hobbes's authority. All meaning is reduced to and born of Terror, the possibility of the struggle to the death.¹ The rationality of deterrence is merely a variant of this dominant world outlook of capitalism and imperialism, inaugurated and exemplified by Hegel's philosophy.

The chapter from Glucksmann's book that we publish here in translation is an analysis on the political level of the alternative world outlook as represented by the thought of Mao Tse-tung. His starting-point is the relation of overdetermination between war and politics. 'The closure of the strategic calculation is perfect, it governs the act of war in all its extension, duration and operational harvest, to install in all its breadth the supremacy of defence. This triple supremacy balances the forces in space (the safety-catch), decides while taking its time, and divides in the last resort the war effort of the two opponents. For, as Clausewitz insisted, war may be thought in itself in its own "specific characteristics"' (p. 307). But this military closure is governed by a political end: the war is as absolute and as protracted as a political decision will allow.

If a war fought against Japanese, French or us imperialism is to be radical and absolute enough to defeat the enemy, only one policy is possible: a revolutionary one. A revolutionary war can only be fought between the 'people' and its 'enemies'. Mao Tse-tung's conception of the people is no populist one. The people must define themselves and their enemies politically before they can defeat them militarily. There is a political distinction between the contradictions 'among the people' and those 'between ourselves and the enemy'. Glucksmann shows that the concept of the 'paper tiger', usually regarded as an outrageously voluntarist image, is a key element in Mao Tse-tung's thought, uniting in itself the military, the political and the theoretical levels. He provides three definitions of it. The first, military, definition asserts that, despite the innovation of nuclear weapons, the precondition for the pursuit of a rational strategy is the acceptance of the supremacy of the defence, embodied in the protracted war of the people against their enemies, as still decisive. The second, political, definition concerns the people's self-definition and their struggle with the enemy they have defined. It is the subject of the present chapter, originally entitled *The Political Definition*. The third definition of the paper tiger is the most literal—it is a lure, leading away from the people, from politics at all, into fatalism and passivity. Behind both is the conflict of world outlooks, the theory of Terror and the struggle to the death against the people's theory of the developmental leaps embodied in the policies of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

¹ 'Meaning is . . . the meaning of the death of meaning', as Glucksmann put it.

André Glucksmann is a member of the brilliant younger generation of French theorists influenced by Louis Althusser, of whose work he has written the most significant critique². His new book is an extension to the field of politics proper of Althusser's programme as expressed in his book *Pour Marx*, and applied to philosophy and history in *Lire le Capital*. It shows that many of Althusser's concepts are also to be found in *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*. *Le Discours de la Guerre*³ is a major development both of scientific strategy and of Marxism, and we hope that our publication of one of its core chapters will help introduce this development to an English audience.

² 'Un structuralisme ventriloque', *Les Temps Modernes*, January, 1967. He has also written an article on Nietzsche, 'Préméditations nietzschéennes' in *Critique*.

³ André Glucksmann: *Le Discours de la Guerre*, Editions de l'Herne, Paris, 1968.

Editorial Note

Le Discours de la Guerre is a long and closely argued book. NLR felt that certain modifications had to be made to Ben Brewster's translation of this chapter, as it was to be published alone, out of its natural context in the book. Firstly, three sentences directly referring to earlier parts of the book were omitted. Secondly, and more important, the punctuation was standardized. Glucksmann's punctuation, characterized by an extensive use of asyndeton, is an integral element of his personal style and is linked to the structure of his argument and the pattern of the book. A translation of the whole book would undoubtedly have to reproduce this punctuation; but in a short extract the reader could merely be puzzled by it. So, despite the loss involved, it was felt the standard English punctuation should be used.

Politics and War in the thought of Mao Tse-tung

War politics, politics war — each 'continues' the other: 'After several decades, the victory of the Chinese people's democratic revolution, viewed in retrospect, will seem like only a brief prologue to a long drama.'¹

Every strategy, even a generalized one, is a limited instrument. He who sets this limit distinguishes a time of war from a time of peace and masters their inter-connection, the two-way traffic relating one to the other. Strategy is a particular but exemplary case of the theory of struggle, of 'contradiction', in which Mao Tse-tung thinks the entire life of society.

Thermonuclear weapons have proved 'non-decisive' in the framework of classical strategy. This could indicate either the subordinate character of the use of the atomic threat, or the end of classical strategy. To exclude this second

alternative it is necessary to show that the 'ultimate' weapon is not the foundation for a political decision that might simply be substituted for the strategic decision.

I. The 'Laws' of Decision

War is thought with the aid of a particular instrument: a matrix in which 'objective' factors only intervene as a function of the 'reciprocal action' of the opponents, the intersection of their strategies. Mathematicians note that this model is valid not only for armed conflict; they extend it for example to the economy, especially to conflict between monopolies.² Thus we find a principle of intelligibility that is valid for every relation of forces in general. Forces cannot be defined in isolation; each is not in itself a (physical or statistical) quantity, and cannot be considered separately at first and added to the others later (non-additivity). To analyse forces is always to relate them together.

Consideration of the relation logically precedes every inquiry bearing on observable reality, because the former organizes the latter. For reasons of method, when he proceeds to an 'analysis of the classes in Chinese society',³ Mao Tse-tung starts with the question 'Who are our enemies? Who are our friends?': the *inter-relation* of forces governs every analysis of concrete forces. This method opposes 'external' causality and 'internal' causality: 'The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing . . . Social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes'.⁴ Strategy offers an example of such a pre-eminence of the relation over the forces it connects together: the various factors producing strength and weakness only act within the 'contradiction' between the opponents. In war, offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems'.⁵

This approach is valid generally: it characterizes a 'world outlook'. The action of external forces is a function of the 'internal' conflict in which they intervene. Mao Tse-tung's originality lies in the conclusions he is able to draw from this affirmation. If forces only exist in a relation, they

² *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (English translation from the First and Second Chinese Editions, Peking, 1961 & 1965), Vol. IV, p. 574 (1949).

³ Cf. Oskar Morgenstern: 'On the Application of Game Theory to Economics' *Recent Advances in Game Theory*, Princeton, 1962: 'There can be no doubt that gam situations even of the most obvious nature abound in business. The fundaments criterion is, of course, whether there are important cases where the outcome of a firm's transactions and decisions does not depend on its own actions alone, but—besides chance—also on those of other firms in a manner which does not permit treating them statistically' (p. 3). More generally, Morgenstern remarks that it is thereby possible to leave behind the hypothesis of a market based on free individual competition, the starting-point of classical political economy (p. 8).

⁴ *Selected Works*, Vol. I (1926).

⁵ 'On Contradiction', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 313.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

may be present there virtually. Strategy bases the superiority of defence on the relation of forces, and the latter cannot be observed since they have to be 'awakened', organized. Observation only verifies strategy *post festum*, when the latter is successful. 'In history, such absolute superiority rarely appears in the early stages of a war or a campaign but is to be found towards its end'.⁶ Thus strategy must be true before it has been verified, like all theory: 'Generally speaking, those (ideas) that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect, but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction'.⁷ The same is true of ideas and theories, whose truth is 'specific' and cannot be confirmed or invalidated by immediate observation: 'Throughout history, new and correct things have often failed at the outset to win recognition from the majority of people and have had to develop by twists and turns in struggle. Often correct and good things have first been regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win through over bitter opposition'.⁸

The internal/external distinction extends the type of intelligibility first encountered in strategy to every form of thought. Forces only exist within a relation, which must be reflected in themselves. The forces may as yet be no more than virtual: the truth of a theory does not depend on observation pure and simple, but organizes the latter, delimiting its scope and validity. The connection between 'theory' and 'praxis' is not conceived as an exchange between ideas and facts—for observable facts are prior constructs, and this construction has a 'specific', 'internal' truth. As opposed to the 'realism' of vulgar Marxism, Mao Tse-tung's thought, like all theory, claims to be true before it has been realized, and to be realizable because it is true.

Upon this basis, 'On Contradiction' determines the general form of the relation of forces, and then deduces from it different 'specific' types as so many different structures of decision.

2. The Universality of Contradiction

The battle, which is decisive for the two opponents, gives strategy the standard that enables it to measure the objective value of either's calculations. In the more general context of a theory of struggle, the reduction of every difference to a contradiction achieves the same focus on decision: 'Each and every difference already contains a contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction.'

⁶ 'On Protracted War', *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 162.

⁷ 'Where do Correct Ideas Come from?' *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung* (English translation of the Second Chinese Edition, Peking, 1967), pp. 405-406.

⁸ 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', *Selected Readings*, p. 374.

Behind Lenin, we should see Hegel again in the plan 'which shows how the concept forms in and out of itself that reality which has vanished in it'.⁹ Conceiving a force as decisive prevents it from being grasped in an isolated definition (or 'determinateness'); its determination 'is not a determinateness which is, and rests, and is related to another in such a manner that the related term and its relation are different from one another'.¹⁰ Not only can a force not be divorced from the relation which connects it to another force, but this relation itself is not superimposed on the two forces, it is not 'the indifference of difference'.¹¹ A relation is only decisive if the terms it connects together are defined within this relation, which means 'that to be opposed is not simply a moment, nor belongs to comparison, but is the peculiar determination of the sides of opposition. So that they are not positive or negative in themselves apart from the relation to the other, but this relation (being exclusive) constitutes their determination'.¹² To theorize the decision presupposes that we can discern behind the differences what it is that regulates their action, their equilibrium and their transformations, the location which decides (= contradiction) and in which all is decided (= internal contradiction).

The loan from Hegel is quite precise, and is the basis for extending the type of thought we have already perceived in strategy. The internal/external distinction excludes the possibility of anything above the decision—the decision decides for itself; the difference/contradiction distinction excludes the possibility of anything below the decision—the decision decides for everything.¹³ Contradiction is the *heart* of the problem: 'What is a problem? A problem is the contradiction in a thing. Where one has an unresolved contradiction, there one has a problem. Since there is a problem, you have to be for one side and against the other, and you have to pose the problem.'¹⁴

The work of thought, which governs all observation, is performed in the relating together; it 'poses' the problem. Thought has no other object: 'there is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist'.¹⁵ Revolutionary activity is the rigorous application of this contradiction, starting with its 'correct' formulation: 'Proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted'.¹⁶ War, like political or cultural revolution, is defined and tempered in this 'crucible'.

⁹ G. W. F. Hegel: *Science of Logic* (English translation by W. H. Johnston and L. G. Struthers, London, 1929), Vol. II, p. 226 ('Subjective Logic', 'On the Concept in General')—translating *Begriff* as 'concept', not as 'Notion'—Translator's note.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 34 ('Objective Logic', Book II, Section I, Ch. I, C(c)).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 45 ('Objective Logic', Book II, Section I, Ch. II, B(b)).

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 54 ('Objective Logic', Book II, Section I, Ch. II, B(c)).

¹³ 'Thinking reason, on the other hand, sharpens (so to speak) the blunt difference or variety, the mere manifold of imagination, into essential difference, that is, opposition. The manifold entities acquire activity and liveliness in relation to one another only when driven on the sharp point of contradiction', *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 69 ('Objective Logic', Book II, Section I, Ch. II, C).

¹⁴ 'Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 61.

¹⁵ 'On Contradiction', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 316.

¹⁶ 'Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 29.

To conceive political activity as a whole presupposes the same intellectual operation as that which developed the whole of strategy from the offensive/defensive contradiction: the analysis of the 'movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing.'¹⁷ As the universality of contradiction enables Mao Tse-tung to regard all 'praxis' as struggle, the general relation of 'theory' to 'praxis' is analogous to the general relation of strategy to war. Theory can construct its concept of contradiction, the universal form of struggle, just as the concept of war was constructed; its intelligibility is completely internal and derives from two axioms.

3. The Intensification of Contradiction

A decisive struggle makes short work: it brings the forces into a state of 'acute' opposition. This process of 'intensification',¹⁸ analogous to the ascent to extremes, refers to a first type of intelligibility of contradiction, to the 'first meaning'¹⁹ intended in the affirmation of the 'identity of opposites' in a contradiction.

The terms of a contradiction 'coexist' even within their opposition; a the contradiction is 'internal', their opposition is an 'absolute relation (Hegel) which defines them absolutely, 'without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life; . . . without the bourgeoisie there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat there would be no bourgeoisie.'²⁰ Contradiction is the logical translation of the 'struggle to the death'; whether it exercises its ascendancy over the relation between two armies, two classes or two ideas, the terms confronting one another in the relation have no existence outside the confrontation itself: 'each is the condition for the other's existence'.²¹

Thus Mao Tse-tung, following Clausewitz, Hegel and the theoretician of the 'zero-sum game', enunciates the first theoretical condition necessary to think a contradiction as 'internal', as a closed relation referring to itself alone.

The matrix of every decision, contradiction presents itself as a dual system of 'places' (principal/secondary). Those have strictly opposed values and mark the relative positions of each of the terms in opposition (or 'aspects'), at every moment in the ascent to extremes (or in the accentuation of a contradiction). 'Of the two contradictory aspects one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction: the aspect which has gained the dominant position'.²² Thus Marxists designate the ruling class at a given epoch as the 'principal aspect' of the class-struggle contradiction. The principal/secondary distinction (strategically: victory/defeat) is the result of the synchronic section the

¹⁷ 'On Contradiction', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 318.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-326.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 337-338.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 338.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 333.

can be made at any moment in the struggle; it establishes the qualities—one the inverse of the other—of the power of decision ('domination') of which each camp ('aspect') disposes.²³ Contradiction is a system of decision: to ascend to extremes, in any domain whatsoever, is a struggle to occupy the principal place (Mao: a struggle for power).

This condition is as universal as contradiction. The ascent to extremes defines the combatants in war as in knowledge. 'Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle... Plants raised in hot-houses are unlikely to be sturdy'.²⁴

Strategically, the ascent to extremes made a 'weapon' of everything which could yield an advantage in it. Politically and culturally, the intensification of a contradiction defines the style of action, or even of writing: 'This is the militant style proper to us, the revolutionary proletarian. Since we want to teach the people to know the truth and arouse them to fight for their own emancipation, we need this militant style. A blunt knife draws no blood'.²⁵ Sharpened contradiction and revolutionary radicalism are synonymous, Mao Tse-tung argues of 'aristocratic', 'decadent', 'creative moods': 'So far as proletarian writers and artists are concerned, should not these kinds of creative moods be destroyed? I think they should; they should be utterly destroyed. And while they are being destroyed, something new can be constructed'.²⁶

The mutual definition of the terms within a contradiction excludes the possibility of any non-contradictory universality: 'As for the so-called love of humanity, there has been no such all-inclusive love since humanity was divided into classes'; the 'people' are not determined with reference to an external human nature, but in their military, political and cultural relation to the 'enemy of the people'.²⁷ Just as the possibility of the ascent to extremes sat in judgment over every military compromise and broke up every one that was compromising, so the sharpened contradiction serves as a criterion for ideological radicalism: 'We Chinese Communists... never balk at any personal sacrifice and are ready at all times to give our lives for the cause; can we be reluctant to discard any idea, view point, opinion or method which is not suited to the needs of the people?'.²⁸

The exclusive co-existence of opposites—the first 'meaning' of contradiction—governs the radicalism and the style of the questions posed: 'Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything... on no account should they follow blindly and encourage

²³ The qualitative principal/secondary distinction corresponds to the strictly opposed and correlative values qualitatively taken by the 'interests' (utilities) of the opponents in a zero-sum game.

²⁴ 'On the Correct Handling...', *Selected Readings*, p. 376.

²⁵ 'A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the *Shenai-Sunman Daily*', *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 245.

²⁶ 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 94.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ 'On Coalition Government', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 317.

slavishness'.²⁹ However, so far, we have only seen the first dimension of Mao Tse-tung's 'dialectics'. The handling of the question introduces a second.

4. The Asymmetry of the 'Aspects' of a Contradiction

The 'people', the subject of strategy, politics and culture, are not only defined by the intensification of contradiction, but also in it. Two camps, opposed in the ascent to extremes, occupy strategically asymmetrical positions: the power of the people is revealed by the privilege of defence. This asymmetry, in the framework of a theory of struggle, is the asymmetry of the 'aspects' of a contradiction, of their 'unevenness'.

A first examination of contradiction has revealed the co-existence of the opposites in their struggle to the death. A second, 'more important' examination deciphers the mechanisms of 'conversion' between the terms of the relation. 'In given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite.' For example, 'by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite'.³⁰ Here Mao Tse-tung is no longer considering the simple mutual exclusion of the terms of a contradiction, but the relations of domination that crystallize in it, by which one 'aspect' gains the upper hand over its opposite or vice versa, until the final victory of the one annihilates the other and causes the contradiction to disappear.

The 'aspect' designates the organization of the opposing terms within the contradiction, considered no longer as a system of competitive places (principal/secondary) but as a system of conversion. Since it governs the movement of a struggle from one end to the other, its two poles ('aspects') must be dominant and dominated in turn, changing places with one another. The 'conversion' of the aspects accounts for the decision process: 'The principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly.'³¹

The secret that permits government of 'the act of war' as a whole, the asymmetry of the two basic 'aspects', the offensive and the defensive, is a particular case of the 'unevenness' of the aspects of a contradiction: 'In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven.'³² The symmetry of competition governs the reciprocal positions of the aspects at each moment of the struggle (principal/secondary); the asymmetry of conversion *only appears* at the end of a 'series of struggles with many twists and turns', in the final victory. The art of

²⁹ 'Rectify the Party's Style of Work', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 49-50. We should recognize here the style that is the pride of the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution': 'The 700 million Chinese are all critics', *Renmin Ribao*, June 8th, 1966.

³⁰ 'On Contradiction', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 338-339.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 333.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 333.

handling the conversion process is designated in the 'methods for resolving contradictions';³³ they must organize the entire development of the contradiction to the profit of one 'aspect'. Only at the 'last moment' will this aspect become definitively the 'principal' one. In other words, the correctness of these methods cannot be observed in the results at each stage, like the 'strategies' of games theory, they have an internal, 'specific', intelligibility; the mere observation of the gains and losses at one moment of the game does not explain it, still less is it a criterion of it.

Here we may discern the solution Mao Tse-tung proposes as his answer to a classical difficulty of Marxism, which distinguishes between class in its current, empirical reality and the 'class position' defined by theory (Marx: class 'in itself'/class 'for itself'; Lenin: class/vanguard party). The peasant army is still 'led by the proletariat', not because its leaders have proletarian origins, life-styles or opinions, but because it occupies the 'proletarian position' in the class struggle; that is, the proletarian 'aspect' or camp as it is defined in and by the strategy of the decisive struggle in China.

But the analogy is not complete; what classical Marxism calls 'the class position' does not correspond to one aspect, but to three. For in the class struggle Mao Tse-tung distinguishes three 'fronts'. The proletariat is defined within three contradictions, each with its own characteristic logic—its type of 'conversion'. The economic aspect, the political and military aspect, the cultural aspect: each of these is treated as a 'form of motion'³⁴ with original and irreducible properties. The 'specific' connection between the two contradictory aspects determines the reciprocal action of these two aspects, including the form taken by their asymmetry, or the 'unevenness' of their development: 'When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite.'³⁵ The cultural struggle has its 'concrete'—i.e. 'specific'—methods, methods which differ not only in fact, but also in principle, from politico-military strategies.

The asymmetry that determines the method of combat and the victory of one of the aspects is also 'internal'. The unevenness of the two aspects creates internally the temporality characteristic of the contradiction, the time necessary to obtain the final decision.

There are as many typically uneven relations between aspects, forms of struggle, autonomous structures of decision, and definitions of the 'people' and the 'proletariat' as there are 'specific contradictions'.

5. The Three Structures of Contradiction

'Where do correct ideas come from?' asks Mao Tse-tung. He begins

³³ Ibid., pp. 322, 323 and 346.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 319.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 323.

his answer like every Marxist: 'Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone'. But he goes on, and in this lies his originality: 'they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment'.³⁶

It is a double originality. On the one hand Mao Tse-tung regards all praxis as a struggle in the strict sense, i.e. a matrix of decision governable by a theory (= strategy of the 'method for resolving a contradiction'). On the other hand, he numbers three praxes, each of which possesses its specific form and characteristic intelligibility.

The world is divided into three basic 'practices'.³⁷ Like game theory, Mao Tse-tung differentiates in the first place between 'relations between man and nature' (the economic practice) and 'certain relations that exist between man and man'.³⁸ In the second place, the relations between man and man are distinguished according to whether they are decided by 'coercion' or by 'persuasion' (the practice of more or less material violence/cultural or ideological practice): "Two different methods, one dictatorial and the other democratic, should be used to resolve the two different kinds of contradictions—those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people."³⁹ So three forms of alterity correspond to the three practices (man/nature, people/enemy, people/people).

This division is not a material one: The three practices do not have distinct and independent real objects. Politics intervenes in the economy. Thought, the object of the third practice, cannot be isolated from the second, for it is always 'stamped with the brand of a class'.⁴⁰ If the three practices are concurrent and act on one another in reality, they are perfectly distinct in their 'specific forms', as each is an original and autonomous matrix of decision. 'Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution . . . contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. . . . The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe.'⁴¹

Each of these basic matrices can be constructed according to the model of the strategic structure. It is specified: 1. by the target (*Ziel*) aimed at by the decision; 2. by the form of struggle which enables the target to be attained. The targets define the extremes in the economic alterna-

³⁶ "Where do Correct Ideas Come from?", *Selected Readings*, p. 405.

³⁷ In general, economy, political struggle and culture. He has various formulations: war—production—culture ("The United Front in Cultural Work", *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 235), etc.

³⁸ "On Practice", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 295, 296 and Vol. III, p. 39.

³⁹ "On the Correct Handling . . .", *Selected Readings*, p. 357.

⁴⁰ "On Practice", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 296.

⁴¹ "On Contradiction", *Selected Works*, Vol. I pp. 321–322.

tive (development/non-development of the productive forces), in the political alternative (ruling/ruled), and in the cultural alternative (true/false). The forms of struggle are distinguished by the methods they bring to bear, coercion or persuasion (self-education, criticism and self-criticism). 'We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not be settled in summary fashion.'⁴²

The form of each matrix reveals a 'method of resolution', a theory of decision based on a particular asymmetry. In each of them, if the 'people apply the adequate method, they will be able to become the 'principal aspect' definitively. In violent struggle, which makes use of coercion, the people are the subject of the defensive strategy of a 'protracted war'. Economically, Mao Tse-tung never makes technology the prime motor of development. The productive forces are 'the productive forces of the Chinese people';⁴³ when he invokes the history of China, his 'materialism' leads him to explain the changes in society by the transformations of the economic base, but these latter refer in turn to the people's practice, to 'the peasant uprisings and peasant wars (which constituted the real motive force of historical development)'.⁴⁴ Here we find one of the motifs of the Great Leap Forward which aimed to awaken the 'productive forces' of the peasant masses: it is also the root-cause of a constant rejection of 'economism'.⁴⁵

In cultural practice, the people are seen for a third time as the 'aspect which must be decisive. 'The life of the people . . . make(s) all literature and art seem pallid by comparison; (it) provide(s) literature and art with an inexhaustible source, their only source . . . In fact, the literary and artistic works of the past are not a source but a stream'.⁴⁶ This primacy is only asserted within the specific form of cultural activity, in a struggle (true/false, old/new, ignorance/knowledge) which Mao Tse-tung foresees as much more 'protracted' than the war of the same name. The reference to the people does not mean an appeal to the majority—which may be wrong,⁴⁷ but refers to the task of establishing a 'common language'.⁴⁸ In this form of activity, the principal and the secondary aspect, the educator and the educated, constantly change their positions, the artist returns to his source, 'popularizes' himself and raises th

⁴² 'On the Correct Handling . . .', *Selected Readings*, p. 374. On the 'specific' character of cultural practice cf. 'Talks at the Yenan Forum . . .': 'Works of art which lack artistic quality have no force, however progressive they are politically', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 90.

⁴³ 'On Coalition Government', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 303.

⁴⁴ 'The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party': 'The class struggle of the peasants, the peasant uprisings and peasant wars constituted the real motive force of historical development in Chinese feudal society. For each of the major peasant uprisings and wars dealt a blow to the feudal regime of the time, and hence more or less furthered the growth of the social productive forces,' *Selected Works* Vol. II, p. 308.

⁴⁵ *Peking Review*, January 30th, 1967.

⁴⁶ 'Talks at the Yenan Forum . . .', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 81.

⁴⁷ 'On the Correct Handling . . .', *Selected Readings*, p. 375.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 369.

level of the people.⁴⁹ If the 'people' finally find that they are the 'principal aspect', this can only be in a culture, a truth and a common language: 'Although man's social life is the only source of literature and art . . . the people are not satisfied with life alone and demand literature and art as well. Why? Because . . . life as reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be . . . more universal than actual everyday life'.⁵⁰ The same type of relation governs the connection 'proletariat'—'popular masses'.⁵¹

Productive force, protracted defence, cultural language: the 'people' are thrice inscribed in an autonomous matrix of decision, defining themselves in it as the decisive aspect in respect to the specific forms of resolution for each of the contradictions. The relation between these three definitions has still to be thought.

6. The Equivalence of the Decisions

Mao Tse-tung's politics determines three targets, pursued with three sorts of means by a single subject, the 'people'. But the unity of the three practices—'politics' as such—cannot be deduced directly from the unity of the actor: the people themselves are only defined within the structures of decision. 'The concept of "the people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in the same country.'⁵² Only the co-ordination of the three practices constitutes the political line: 'policy is the starting-point of all the practical actions of a revolutionary party . . . A revolutionary party is carrying out a policy whenever it takes any action'.⁵³

How is a global decision governing three autonomous mechanisms of decision to be justified? The question is posed twice: 1. when, in a precise time and situation, it is necessary to find the crucial point, the 'principal contradiction', in the jumble of ideological, political and military problems; 2. when it is necessary to think the general, theoretical connection which gathers together the economy, politics and culture in the unity of Mao Tse-tung's thought.

* * *

In a concrete situation, Mao Tse-tung proceeds with the aid of a new distinction: principal contradiction/secondary contradiction.

The three basic practices differ in form, but they do not act in three

⁴⁹ 'If popularization remains at the same level for ever, with the same stuff being supplied month after month and year after year, always the same "Little Cowherd" and the same "man, hand, mouth, knife, cow, goat", will not the educators and those being educated be six of one and half a dozen of the other? What would be the sense of such popularization? The people demand popularization and, following that, higher standards; they demand higher standards month by month and year by year', 'Talks at the Yenan Forum . . .', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 83.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁵¹ 'On the Correct Handling . . .', *Selected Readings*, p. 357.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁵³ 'On the Policy concerning Industry and Commerce', *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 204.

distinct worlds. Their intersection gives rise to a multiplicity of problems in the same situation, and these problems are interdependent. He who would transform them must first order them: 'There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing.'⁵⁴ To discover the central problem that makes possible the government of this series is to pin-point 'the principal contradiction whose existence and development determines or influences the existence and development of the other contradictions'.⁵⁵

This registration of the theatre of operations must be constantly brought up to date. 'The contradictions change position'. Sometimes 'imperialism' is opposed to an entire colonial or semi-colonial country (national war), sometimes it allies itself to an indigenous class (civil war).⁵⁶ Mao Tse-tung associates the principal contradiction of the moment with the basic categories of Marxism (class society—class struggle—capitalism—imperialism—metropolitan/semi-colonial struggle—China's internal contradictions—KMT/CCP struggle).⁵⁷ But he never deduces the principal contradiction from these principles. It is 'investigation' of the terrain, observation of the battle-field that establishes the crucial point.

Observation is strategic in so far as it introduces a war plan. Mao Tse-tung is here playing very subtly on the difference between the principal contradiction (which establishes the decisive theatre of operations) and the principal aspect of the contradiction (which reveals the decisive method of action within that theatre). 'Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, where imperialism will be overthrown.'⁵⁸ The force that installs the principal contradiction ('imperialism', which intervenes in a certain way, according to the world situation) is this contradiction's principal aspect—at the time of its installation. But the contradiction has its own logic and this does not depend on the force that introduced it. The principal (dominant) aspect may become the secondary (dominated) aspect, while the principal contradiction remains the same. A strategy based on the form of action appropriate to this contradiction (in this case, protracted war) makes this 'conversion' inevitable. Observation fixes the location of decision (relation between the contradictions) but it

⁵⁴ 'For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on', 'On Contradictions', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 322.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

form remains that of one of the three canonic practices (relation of the 'aspects').

Here again Mao Tse-tung is generalizing the Clausewitzian mode of thought. The cultural practice has a political significance: it is a 'continuation' of politics by other means, specific ones. Politics in turn has a cultural significance, and these two types of action intervene in economic activity. Each one is a continuation of the others with its own characteristic mode of action as go-between; in considering any particular historical situation it is necessary to start with the principal contradiction and then to search out the decisive practice. Its target will then subordinate to itself the others' targets which will become its 'instruments'; in a given situation, the relation between the three practices is analogous to the relation of ordered equivalence which interconnects *Ziel* and *Zweck* in strategic calculation.

The problem which focusses a political situation may derive from an 'external' force: it is then posed by the enemy (e.g. 'imperialism'). But its solution can only be internal, as a function of the process of decision characteristic of one of the three basic practices. Which one? The selection of the decisive form takes place twice, allowing two temporal divisions. The 'principal contradiction' determines an epoch and the form of action that governs it (imperialism—protracted war). The relation between the 'aspects' within the latter allows a smaller-scale periodization: the CCP can only conduct the protracted war if it knows how to establish the correct strategy. Thus at a given moment in the protracted war, ideological problems may be determinant. No pre-established order fixes these relations once and for all; in another stage or in a different situation, conflict may in its turn be no more than a (principal or secondary) aspect of the cultural contradiction, which has become the principal one.⁵⁹

Who decides the adequate strategy, who fixes the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of the contradiction? In other words, *where* does the ordering of the three practices take place, establishing the political line for a given epoch? Is it in the first, the second or the third practice? Is there one general relation between them which would alone make it possible to conceive their particular orderings, in the diversity of situations?

* * *

The economy, the use of force and culture each has its own characteristic intelligibility, Mao Tse-tung finds it expressed in Marxist political economy, revolutionary strategy and the methods for 'the correct handling of contradictions among the people'. These three types of rationality must co-operate to establish, in every situation, *the* correct line which carries with it the unitary decision. How is the relation between them settled?

⁵⁹ 'True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive roles; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role', *Ibid.*, p. 336.

The economic contradictions are situated theoretically by the universal/particular distinction. The 'universal' contradictions define the theatre of operations, for the economic categories describe the most constant givens, the framework of the action (class society, capitalism, imperialism). On the other side, the 'particular' contradictions articulate these categories around matrices of decision borrowed from the other two 'practices'. The universal discourse of political economy is never enough to explain particular decisive strategies: 'it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides'.⁶⁰

No more do strategic categories by themselves explain the correctness of a decision; they are subordinate to the friend/enemy distinction of which they are not the origin.⁶¹

So it is in the third kind of practice that the concept appears which settles for each decision the relation between the three practices within the single decision. This might seem to be a truism: theory is born of theoretical practice.⁶² But this would be to forget that each practice uses specific forms; to say that theory is elaborated in the forms of persuasive discussion is to recognize that in every struggle, even the most violent or the most economic, the correct line is necessarily fixed by the action of criticism and self-criticism 'among' the people or the Party. Here we find the origin of the problem of the organization of the 'General Staff' of the Revolution and the particular meaning Mao seeks to give to 'democratic centralism', since he is not satisfied with the classical Marxist comparison of the 'Party' to an army or a central state planning ministry.

This primacy of the third practice in the establishment of a correct line definitively closes the whole decision process in politics, as far as Mao Tse-tung is concerned. Utilizing diverse means, among which economic activity, violence or persuasion are in the ascendant by turns according to the case, it is always 'among the people' that the decision will be taken. Its mechanisms are essentially 'internal'.

7. Paper Tiger

The definition of Mao Tse-tung's politics is governed entirely by the

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 316. The opposition basic/specific often interferes with the opposition universal/particular. The two French versions (Ed. de Pekin, Ed. Sociales) translate the same phrase indifferently by one or the other of these oppositions (the English translations from Peking only use universal/particular—Translator's note).

⁶¹ 'The protracted war was led by the "people" and in its name. At the beginning of the war, and during it, strategy imposed its criteria and its forms on political action. But the last hour is a political notion. It is the "people" who define their opponent and not *vice versa*, the decision which in the last resort distinguishes between friend and enemy is political. Once this decision—which may initially be a silent one—has been taken, strategy will develop its "specific" demands'. André Glucksmann: *Discours de la Guerre*, Paris, 1967, pp. 309–310.

⁶² 'Many theories of natural science are held to be true not only because they were considered when natural scientists originated them, but because they have been verified in subsequent scientific practice', 'On practice', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 304–305.

distinction that inaugurated it, the distinction counterposing internal decision and external causality. The logical manipulation of a contradiction progressively reduces the role of external factors. From differences to contradictions, from their multiplicity to the principal contradiction, from the doublet of aspects (principal/secondary) to the asymmetry of their development (unevenness), there must always be a move from the exterior, which may pose the terms of the problem, to the interior, which resolves it. The manipulation of real contradictions reaches the same conclusion, situating the decision 'among the people' within the productive forces, the protracted war and culture, and in the persuasive discussion that fixes the relation between the three. The primacy of the internal decision defines one of the two 'world outlooks' that Mao judges to be basic—his own.⁶³

This conception has essentially revealed itself to be a theory of decision. In its framework, the deterrent threat is posed as a paper tiger: it cannot govern the basic political decision, it is not the 'principal contradiction'. 'The destiny of China is decided by the Chinese people, and the destiny of the world by the peoples of the world, and not by the nuclear weapon'.⁶⁴

Anyone unfamiliar with Mao Tse-tung's theory of politics risks hearing no more here than an echo of the optimistic fatalism that Voltaire did justice to in his own day. But there is nothing of *Candide* about a thinker for whom victory never depends on an automatism, but on a theoretically 'correct', i.e. exact, line.⁶⁵

The true discussion does not bear on the consequences—which would be serious for everyone⁶⁶—of the possible utilization of atomic weapons. Nor on the fact that 'a world war can be prevented'.⁶⁷ But on the means to avoid this utilization, i.e. on the function that should be allotted to atomic terror in international relations: 'The question that is posed in reality is to know what policy to adopt'.⁶⁸

The terror that opens up the perspective of an atomic war exists. So do 'revolutionary' wars. A Communist leader takes both aspects into account. If he is Chinese he reckons that revolutionary war must become the principal aspect ('despise nuclear blackmail strategically'), since the nuclear risk is seen, but defined as basically subordinate ('take full account of the opposing force tactically'). Inversely for the Soviets: 'the nuclear weapons and missiles that have come into being in the middle of the century have changed the old idea of war'.⁶⁹ Wars, all

⁶³ 'On Contradiction', Section I: 'The Two World Outlooks', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 311.

⁶⁴ *Peking Review*, No. 42, October 16th, 1964, Special Supplement, p. (III).

⁶⁵ 'On the Policy concerning Industry and Commerce', *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, p. 204: 'All comrades in the Party should understand that the enemy is now completely isolated. But his isolation is not tantamount to our victory. If we make mistakes in policy, we shall still be unable to win victory' (February, 1948).

⁶⁶ 'Enormous chaos', the disappearance 'of a third or a half' of the world's population (Mao Tse-tung in Moscow, November 11th, 1957).

⁶⁷ Declaration of the Chinese Government, September 1st, 1963.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* With reference to their definition of politics, the Chinese leaders accuse the Soviets of forgetting that war is a continuation of politics.

⁶⁹ Letter from the CC of the CPSU, July 14th, 1963.

wars, are subordinate to this question: 'Peaceful co-existence is not simply the absence of war, nor is it a temporary and precarious truce between two wars; it is the co-existence of two opposed social systems based on the mutual rejection of the use of war as a means to settle differences between states.'⁷⁰

In both cases one 'aspect' acts on the other. The Chinese authorities believe that the extension of 'revolutionary' wars decreases the risks of nuclear war because it imposes another type of decision (it 'demonetizes' the nuclear threat) and because it weakens the 'imperialist camp'. Reciprocally, nuclear peace, according to the Soviets, must open 'peaceful roads' to socialism.

Each thesis is as 'dialectical' as the other, if we care to designate by this great name the simple idea of an interaction between the two aspects. They are radically contradictory as to what is judged to be the decisive aspect, the Chinese qualifying as 'nuclear fetishism' the idea of basing policy on deterrence: 'In the eyes of the Soviet leaders, the whole world and the whole history of humanity should gravitate about the nuclear weapon.'⁷¹

Nuclear armament does not produce a Copernican revolution in politics for anyone who reasons within the settled architecture of Mao Tse-tung's thought. Whatever the forms of contradiction envisaged, the decisive aspect is perpetually sought 'among the people' in dialogue determined as the inverse of coercion. Terror is always exclusive (exercised on the enemy), never inclusive. It is never the source of meaning and community as it was in the *Phenomenology of Mind*, as Hegel claimed it has been throughout Christian civilization.

Hence we should not suspect affectation in the occasionally heroic tone of Chinese declarations.⁷² Heroism is not opposed to their reason, nor does it transcend it. It, too, is a 'judicious way to deal with contradictions' by the affirmation of the 'people' as the source of every decision. From Mao Tse-tung's view-point, the contradiction in the world situation lends itself to two approaches. As in every contradiction it is possible to privilege external factors (weapons) or internal factors (peoples)—two 'world outlooks' are here irreducibly opposed: the one, the two, the two that already shared the world of thought according to *Contradiction* (final version, 1951).

Whoever judges from within the framework of Mao Tse-tung's thought will not hear the deterrent discourse, he will not understand that shared terror may be the basis for a community, and give a meaning, a politics and a future to the word humanity. This is not a matter of son

⁷⁰ 'In adopting its new programme, our great Party solemnly declares before the whole of humanity that it regards it as the principal target of its foreign policy not only to avoid world war, but to ban wars for ever from the life of society, within the lifetime of the present generation', N. Khrushchev, XXIInd Congress of the CPSU.

⁷¹ Declaration, September 1st, 1963.

⁷² 'In the eyes of the Soviet leaders, in the nuclear era in which we live, we can do more than survive, our target no longer exists . . . Each has his own ideal and must not measure others according to our own lights', *ibid*.

anecdotal and contingent opinions on the atomic danger. Still less a bluff. The Chinese are neither blind nor deaf: in so far as they refer themselves to Mao Tse-tung's thought, they think differently, on the basis of a theory of decision that will not allow that world order can be born positively out of equality in Terror.⁷³

Mao Tse-tung rejects the Hegelian solution, the struggle to the death. For him as for Clausewitz after Jena, 'resistance' is sacred. The absolute fear of death never becomes the negativity of the spirit, it absolutely defines the slave, and the fascinating fear of nuclear death, 'the nuclear slave'. 'Marxism contains many principles which in the last analysis come down to a single sentence: it is right to rebel.'⁷⁴

⁷³ Hence the claim that nuclear weapons are no more significant politically than other weapons of mass destruction (gas, micro-biological weapons, etc) and that the latter should be proscribed in the same way.

⁷⁴ 'Speech at Yenan on Stalin's 60th Birthday', quoted in *Peking Review*, April 10th, 1967.

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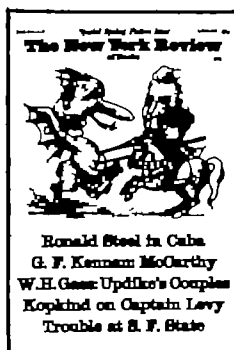
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'If a book is worth anything, it's worth not 2,000 copies at 63s. but 30,000 copies at 4s. 6d.', writes a publisher in this account of his work in a leading paperback firm. Yet with the market already saturated with titles, G.G. believes that British publishing—often inefficient and archaic—is being saved only by the introduction of new marketing techniques and concepts.

The Publisher

To start at the beginning, or as near to the beginning as it is safe to go. Publishers are traditionally supposed to be failed writers. A number of good writers are part-time publishers. None of them, to my knowledge, is a first-rate publisher. More of them, naturally enough, are 'literary advisers', whatever that means. But of first-rate publishers there are perhaps a dozen in this country, depending at what point you draw the line, and including those who issue highly specialized books. I am an editor, and in the firm for which I work editors are considered mini-publishers: we are expected to be responsible for everything that happens to the books we look after. I consider myself at the age of 26 an unoriginal and mildly lazy publisher, and a promising writer. The Literary World, that self-congratulating, self-perpetuating coterie of amateurs residing entirely in London, has by its lack of interest—with the exception, surprisingly, of a handful of authors, editors and critics I happen to respect—deemed me a mediocre writer. But as a publisher I am considered bright and lively, which shows how little talent there is around in the profession. Or trade. Or industry. Or occupation.

Witness the above four alternatives: publishing is not certain what kind of animal it is. Whether it is respectable or slightly adventurous and arty. Whether one wears a dark suit or corduroys to the office. Whether one drinks wine or beer. Whether one is on a par with advertising men or teachers or writers. And that is my dilemma. When is a publisher not a publisher? When he's a writer, or thinks he's a writer? Maybe. To declare my credentials: an editor with our best paperback

firm. Chairman of the Society of Young Publishers. A member of the Literature Panel of the Arts Council. Author of two collections of poems, three novels, innumerable short stories, three plays. Some of the poetry and stories published, the remainder not. Being 'in publishing', anything one writes oneself is suspected. All of which narrows me down to one person. Assuming I have 'got somewhere'—and this combination, probably common to many publishers, of over-weening arrogance and reproachful humility, insists that I have; so does the not always disguised incredulity of my colleagues and betters—how have I got there, why have I got there? And, above all, *where* is there?

It is, inevitably, being in a position to say yes or no to certain literary offerings put before me. Having the right to do so, because for this I am paid. It might be anyone's job—it happens for the moment to be mine. Ironically, it is the part that is carried out most easily. It is difficult concerting for those not initiated into the supposed mysteries of publishing—which don't exist—to be told that I tend to wade through piles of 12 manuscripts in half an hour and give them all the thumbs down. Together, these 12 novels and volumes of commonplace autobiography and awful poetry and histories of William the Conqueror (hundreds of them doing the rounds, 18 months ago) may have taken their authors 20 years to write. And in some cases I have relegated them to the rejection pile after casually reading one, two, three sentences. Who the hell do I think I am . . . ?

Very early on in my life as an editor I decided it was kinder to return manuscripts to their owners with rejection slips rather than with long helpful, critical letters, endeavouring to explain the reasons for rejection. The sad, frustrated author would be wounded to his sensitivity quick by my saying, say, that his sentences might benefit by not being invariably two-and-a-half foolscap pages in length. How was I to know that he prided himself especially on his punctuation? More often than not, such letters from me—or from any other editor, for that matter—elicited foul, savage or at least hopelessly time-consuming letters. If enormous and futile correspondence would ensue, the author or editor interested in proving you wrong. Invariably, you—or rather I, the editor—ended everything by saying, politely or not: why, if you feel like this, did you send your masterpiece to someone you didn't know probably didn't even know of by repute? Why trust your luck, your life's work, to some no doubt seedy little man determined to do you down, sitting behind a desk covered with splinters in a badly lighted room with a threadbare carpet?

The editor, to put the relationship of author and publisher at its most basic, is trying to earn his salary, hoping to stay in a job which most other people would love to have, many of them not actually caring whether or not they are paid, all of them feeling they could do it better than the current incumbent. If an editor, therefore, sees a flicker of talent, of promise in a manuscript, he will follow it up, meet the author if this is at all practicable, establish a relationship with him as a person and as a writer. Only thus, to my mind, can an editor make himself really useful to an author. Only when an author feels he knows the editor well, is he likely to consider constructive criticism from him.

Some authors do accept, at least acknowledge and consider, criticisms from editors unknown to them. Which is gratifying to the editor in a negative sort of way. I have received some highly appreciative letters from writers whose MSS I have read—or merely had read—and commented upon. I wrote to these authors in the terms I did, believing: 1. that there was enough merit in the manuscript to make the risk of being attacked as a sour-puss worth taking; and 2. that the author would probably benefit by criticism. I am deeply committed to this attitude, call it arrogance if you will: that there isn't a single book by a new writer (I take these to include authors of, probably, fewer than four or five books) that hasn't benefited, or wouldn't benefit, by skilful editing. By this I mean that the editor should be *ex fait* and, to as great a degree as possible, in sympathy with the author's intentions.

Publisher's editors may be frustrated writers, but if they could be full-time authors and make a living from writing alone they would not, most of them, remain publishers. Not many of them might volunteer this, but I have yet to meet one who denies it. I find myself pulled in two directions: I loathe writing 'creatively'—it terrifies me, brings the palms of my hands out in sweat, worries me sick—and love publishing. Yet given the choice I would always rather write. This being because the author is a primary producer, the publisher only secondary. I have said already that the publisher 'creates his authors'. The satisfaction of this creation, though perhaps more difficult to achieve, acts as a smoke-screen against the reality that in fact it is a second-hand creation, not in any respect equivalent to that of the primary producer. The author is responsible for producing the raw material, be it textbook or work of art, the publisher merely for selling it. There is no *necessity* for publishers to have a specialist understanding of the contents of their books, or in the case of fiction even to possess an opinion. With books which might in any sense be termed specialized, and this includes 'literary' as opposed to potential best-seller and popular fiction, publishers can, and nearly always do, fall back upon the opinions of 'experts'. Seen thus the publisher is but entrepreneur and salesman.

The word 'publish' means, or should mean, not only to make available, but to make sure that it *is* available. I publish a novel, and snatch the first copy off the production line, turn the book over and over, admire the shiny jacket, flick through the pages, read quickly through the blurb anxious not to discover an error, then consign the book to my ever-lengthening bookshelves. As far as I am concerned, only too frequently that tends to be the end of my relationship with books, maybe before they have been read by anyone other than myself and the author. There are never, ever enough hours in the day, and I return to the pile of unsolicited manuscripts, begin to wade through them. Is the masterpiece there today, or will it be in five years time? I go on, knowing it will, may be there some day. Nowadays I am keener than I used to be to share my belief in the books I publish with others, keen enough to make others, complete strangers, purchase and read the books that have given me pleasure. Purchase, I said. Not borrow. But that's another, different problem. It looks, at last, that legislation will soon be introduced to ensure that those who borrow books from public libraries will to a small degree recompense professional authors for

their work. Rightly or wrongly, I am more interested in seeing that authors receive decent terms than that my firm makes a profit from the books I publish. I believe I publish only good books, therefore the firm will make a profit. Too naive? Not in practice.

I left school not knowing what I wanted to do. Or, more correctly, having been pretty idle failed to pass the examinations I ought to have passed, which should have led me to other things. Instead, I crept in at art college for two terms, studying book design and typography. I spent weeks designing title pages for *Henry IV*, then set them up in Caslon Old Face and printed 12 copies on the college press.

A job became available at one of the local publishers—this was Edinburgh—and there for four years in a firm founded in 1778 I was taught publishing, and very well taught. I had never wondered how to get into publishing. I needed a job at a particular time and happened to get one. It was only afterwards, after three or four years, that I realized I had obtained more or less the job I wanted in a profession I certainly wanted to enter. Nepotism is well known to be particularly rife in publishing. All our leading hardback publishers seem to have cohorts of sons and daughters who infiltrate Daddy's firm. Daddy nowadays tends to be scrupulous about making certain that Sonny starts at the very bottom, so that after Sonny has been in publishing for a year and almost on the board—yes, I exaggerate—Sonny can say 'Of course like you, in spite of my father being chairman of the firm, I started at the very bottom. I wouldn't have had it any other way.'

But the great days of Edinburgh's publishing, printing and bookselling did not coincide with my lifetime. A week after I left, the firm, owned during my time and for decades previously by two families of local booksellers, was purchased by *The Financial Times* Group, since when it seems to have become sadly and increasingly anonymous to the eyes of this Scot. I travelled 400 miles south and for 18 months worked as advertising manager for a small, literary publishing house, which had a habit of perhaps cultivating its employees in too personal a fashion for my Calvinistic liking. I departed rather suddenly, having been treated infinitely better than I deserved (as my boss I'm sure still readily agrees he wrote me a filthy letter when I resigned. Publishers do get involved with their authors and staff, and tend to take everything over-personally). I had learnt, especially, the absurd extent to which hardback publishers rely upon selling the paperback rights of their books for survival. For the next 18 months I 'practised' as an editor with a large hardback publishing house.

If a book is worth anything it's worth not 2,000 copies at 63s. 1d. for 50,000 copies at 4s. 6d. That is the difference in a sentence between hardback and paperback publishing, and nothing to do with books specialized as opposed to popular intent. It also has more than a little to do with providing a social service: good books being made available at prices most people can afford, and are willing to pay. In any interview, I suppose the applicant is, silently, interviewing the employer. I was won over completely when my future employer—the most workman, incidentally, in British publishing—said 'I see us as providing worthwhile and essential social service'. Or words to that effect.

Almost everyone of my generation in publishing known to me (and the world is so small that you tend to know, or know of, most people in it doing a comparable job to oneself) obtained their first jobs by contacts—knowing someone who knew someone who knew . . . Nearly everyone on the editorial side is a graduate. I still find it irritating and embarrassing the way it is assumed—being an editor—that I must have been at Oxbridge. The non-graduate is still the exception, but working-class editors are no longer rare birds, despite the play made by the colour supplements of the fact that Paul Hamlyn was once a barrow boy, and Gareth Powell, the whizz kid paperback publisher, once a lorry driver.

Young publishers, almost to a man, are not concerned with class or background, either their own or their authors'. Perhaps this lack of class awareness is because they all enjoy their work. They wouldn't stay if they didn't. There are no hours to the job, it is as endless as the works of Harold Robbins. Salaries in hardback publishing are still lamentable—I began at £3. 10s. a week. The publicity and sales manager of a large group of publishers, aged about 35, was until recently being paid £1,200 a year. Paperback publishing is much better paid; I earn £1,700. Unless you are overwhelmingly inefficient or choose another profession, you will probably remain in the game until you retire.

The over-production continues although the market cannot absorb all the books thrust upon it. It is only necessary to glance at a few publisher's balance sheets to be clear about this. It is a case of publishers, and this is within their right, indeed part of their job, exploiting their authors commercially by selling as many subsidiary rights as possible in each book—serial rights, paperback, film, television, radio, translation—at extortionate rates. Book publishing remains—and this explains its viability—the staple diet of all the other entertainment industries. On the average novel the publisher loses approximately £1,000, according to one not particularly inefficient fiction publisher. He is investing in the future, in the belief that one day his run-of-the-mill novelist will join the ranks of Ian Fleming and John le Carré. First novels rarely sell more than 3,000 copies. These type of problems do not seem, in practice, to be alleviated by small publishing houses going under the umbrella of large houses—one publishing group adds 47 per cent on to the costing of every book it publishes to attempt to cover overheads. The industry is, I think, being saved from total extinction at the last minute by the introduction of new marketing techniques and concepts.

It may seem part of the general inefficiency that books should take so long to publish, though as a principle it can reasonably be defended. There is no reason why most books should be published in a shorter period than, say, nine months after delivery. Book publishers are not competing with newspapers or television. This is quite apparent to anyone in the business: even with the recent development of computer typesetting, the mechanics of publishing (and more especially of printing) are hardly more advanced than they were in Caxton's time. Dirty type, individual metal characters, ink, rollers, rolls of paper, blocks. . .

For a profession living off the ideas of others, and trading in them, it is ironic how reluctant publishers and printers are to think up their own for the benefit of their jobs.

As a race, publishers can usefully be divided into two categories: Editors, responsible for and frequently only interested in the content of the book, the text itself; and publishers—impresarios, as keen to promote and flog the product as they care what's inside the package. Again I find myself dithering somewhere between the two categories. On the one hand, there is the writer in me, and the editor sympathetic to my authors; on the other, the showman, anxious that *my* books, my authors should receive all the publicity and cudos they deserve. Editors who are potential good publishers invariably seem to end up on the administrative, management side, probably only reading books on holiday. Publishing is stacked with such ironies.

Publishing is considered glamorous by outsiders. I am writing this piece at home, having been off work for a day with severe eye strain through having read badly typed third or fourth carbons of various manuscripts for the whole of last Saturday and Sunday. It is rare for editors to have time to sit down and read in the office—'What, *reading*? Nothing to do?' is a familiar comment from colleagues. How do I spend my office hours? Answering innumerable letters from author agents (a quite unnecessary evil, if all publishers did their jobs properly), book buyers, or more probably borrowers, asking when such and such a book will be published, at what price; discussing projects for non-fiction works, with potential authors or writers on the list starved of subjects for their next books; reading innumerable magazines and newspapers, picking out likely ideas for books, and possible authors; catching up on reviews; negotiating foreign rights, film rights, serial rights; answering complaints about misprints; answering letters from people demanding to know why this book has not been published, and this book has; visiting universities throughout the country, trying to put under contract before anyone else does the brightest young academic lunching literary editors and reviewers; liaising with the other departments in the firm—discussing, for every individual book, binding, illustrations, type face, number of copies to be printed, jacket, copyright problems, libel, price, publication date; soothing a translator you've insulted by saying she may be the greatest expert in the world on her language but she obviously doesn't begin to recognize a decent English sentence; persuading your accounts department to advance money to improvident and impecunious authors. Oh, and actual editing manuscripts.

G.

Cinema - Code and Image

In recent years a considerable degree of interest has developed in the semiology of the cinema, in the question whether it is possible to dissolve cinema criticism and cinema aesthetics into a special province of the general science of signs. It has become increasingly clear that traditional theories of film language and film grammar, which grew up spontaneously over the years, need to be re-examined and related to the established discipline of linguistics. If the concept of 'language' is to be used it must be used scientifically and not simply as a loose, though suggestive, metaphor. The debate which has arisen in France and Italy, round the work of Roland Barthes, Christian Metz, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Umberto Eco, points in this direction.

The main impulse behind the work of these critics and semiologists springs from Ferdinand de Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*. After Saussure's death in 1913 his former pupils at the University of Geneva collected and collated

his lecture outlines and their own notes and synthesized these into a systematic presentation, which was published in Geneva in 1915. In the *Cours* Saussure predicted a new science, the science of semiology. 'A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology* (from Greek *semeion* "sign"). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance. Linguistics is only a part of the general science of semiology; the laws discovered by semiology will be applicable to linguistics, and the latter will circumscribe a well-defined area within the mass of anthropological facts.' Saussure, who was impressed by the work of Durkheim in sociology, emphasized that signs must be studied from a social view-point, that language was a social institution which eluded the individual will. The linguistic system—what might nowadays be called the 'code'—pre-existed the individual act of speech, the 'message'. Study of the system therefore had logical priority.

Saussure stressed, as his first principle, the arbitrary nature of the sign. The signifier (the sound-image *a-k-s* or *b-ɔ-f*, for example) has no natural connection with the signified (the concept 'ox'). To use Saussure's term, the sign is 'unmotivated'. Saussure was not certain what the full implications of the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign were for semiology. 'When semiology becomes organized as a science, the question will arise whether or not it properly includes modes of expression based on completely natural signs, such as pantomime. Supposing the new science welcomes them, its main concern will still be the whole group of systems grounded on the arbitrariness of the sign. In fact, every means of expression used in society is based, in principle on collective behaviour or—what amounts to the same thing—on convention. Polite formulas, for instance, though often imbued with certain natural expressiveness (as in the case of a Chinese who greets his emperor by bowing down to the ground nine times), are nonetheless fixed by rule; it is this rule and not the intrinsic value of the gesture that obliges one to use them. Signs that are wholly arbitrary realize better than the others the ideal of the semiological process; that is why language, the most complex and universal of all systems of expression is also the most characteristic; in this sense linguistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology although language is only one particular semiological system.'

Linguistics was to be both a special province of semiology and, at the same time, the master-pattern ('le patron général') for the various other provinces. All the provinces, however—or, at least, the central ones—were to have as their object systems 'grounded on the arbitrariness of the sign'. These systems, in the event, proved hard to find. Would semiologists find themselves limited to such micro-languages as the language of traffic-signs, the language of fans, ships' signalling systems, the language of gesture among Trappist monks, various kinds of semaphore and so on. These micro-languages proved extremely restricted cases, capable of articulating a very sparse semantic range.

Many of them were parasitic on verbal language proper. Roland Barthes, as a result of his researches into the language of costume and fashion, concluded that it was impossible to escape the pervasive presence of verbal language. Words enter into discourse of another order either to fix an ambiguous meaning, like a label or a title, or to contribute to the meaning what cannot otherwise be communicated, like the words in the bubbles in a strip-cartoon. Words either anchor meaning or convey it.

It is only in very rare cases that non-verbal systems can exist without auxiliary support from the verbal code. Even highly developed and intellectualized systems like painting and music constantly have recourse to words, particularly at a popular level: songs, cartoons, posters. Indeed, it would be possible to write the history of painting as a function of the shifting relation between words and images. One of the main achievements of the Renaissance was to banish words from the picture-space. Yet words repeatedly forced themselves back; they re-appear in the paintings of El Greco, for instance, in Dürer, in Hogarth: one could give countless examples. In the twentieth century words have returned with a vengeance. In music, words were not banished until the beginning of the seventeenth century; they have asserted themselves in opera, in oratorio, in lieder. The cinema is another obvious case in point. Few silent films were made without inter-titles. Erwin Panovsky has recollected his cinema-going days in Berlin around 1910: 'The producers employed means of clarification similar to those we find in medieval art. One of these were printed titles or letters, striking equivalents of the medieval *tituli* and scrolls (at a still earlier date there even used to be explainers who would say, *viva voce*, "Now he thinks his wife is dead but she isn't" or "I don't wish to offend the ladies in the audience but I doubt that any of them would have done that much for her child").' In Japan, 'explainers' of this kind formed themselves into a guild, which proved strong enough to delay the advent of the talkie.

In the end Barthes reached the conclusion that semiology might be better seen as a branch of linguistics, rather than the other way round. This seems a desperate conclusion. The province turns out to be so much 'the most complex and universal' that it engulfs the whole. Yet our experience of cinema suggests that great complexity of meaning can be expressed through the images. Thus, to take an obvious example, the most trivial and banal book can be made into an extremely interesting and, to all appearances, significant film; reading a screenplay is usually a barren and arid experience, intellectually as well as emotionally. The implication of this is that it is not only systems exclusively 'grounded on the arbitrariness of the sign' which are expressive and meaningful. 'Natural signs' cannot be so readily dismissed as Saussure imagined. It is this demand for the re-integration of the natural sign into semiology which led Christian Metz, a disciple of Barthes, to declare that cinema is indeed a language, but a language without a code (without a 'langue', to use Saussure's term). It is a language because it has texts; there is a meaningful discourse. But, unlike verbal language, it cannot be referred back to a pre-existent code. Metz's position involves him in a considerable number of

problems which he never satisfactorily surmounts; he is forced back to the concept of a "logic of implication" by which the image becomes language'; he quotes with approval Bela Balazs's contention that it is through a 'current of induction' that we make sense of a film. It is not made clear whether we have to learn this logic or whether it is natural. And it is difficult to see how concepts like 'logic of implication' and 'current of induction' can be integrated into the theory of semiology.

What is needed is a more precise discussion of what we mean by a 'natural sign' and by the series of words such as 'analogous', 'continuous', 'motivated', which are used to describe such signs, by Barthes, Metz and others. Fortunately the groundwork necessary for further precision has already been accomplished, by Charles Sanders Peirce, the American logician. Peirce was a contemporary of Saussure; like Saussure his papers were collected and published posthumously, between 1931 and 1935, twenty years after his death in 1914. Peirce was the most original American thinker there has been, so original, as Roman Jakobson has pointed out, that for a great part of his working life he was unable to obtain a university post. His reputation now rests on his more accessible work, principally his teachings on pragmatism. His work on semiology (or 'semiotic' as he himself called it) has been sadly neglected. Unfortunately his most influential disciple, Charles Morris, travestied his position by coupling it with a virulent form of behaviourism. Severe criticisms of behaviourism in relation to linguistics and aesthetics, from writers such as E. H. Gombrich and Noam Chomsky, have naturally tended to damage Peirce by association with Morris. However, in recent years, Roman Jakobson has done a great deal to re-awaken interest in Peirce's semiology, a revival of enthusiasm long overdue.

The main texts which concern us here are his *Speculative Grammar*, the letters to Lady Welby and *Existential Graphs* (subtitled 'my chef d'oeuvre' by Peirce). These books contain Peirce's taxonomy of different classes of sign, which he regarded as the essential semiological foundation for a subsequent logic and rhetoric. The classification which is important to the present argument is that which Peirce called 'the second trichotomy of signs', their division into icons, indices and symbols. 'A sign is either an *icon*, an *index* or a *symbol*.'

An icon, according to Peirce, is a sign which represents its object mainly by its similarity to it; the relationship between signifier and signified is not arbitrary but is one of resemblance or likeness. Thus for instance, the portrait of a man resembles him. Icons can, however be divided into two sub-classes: images and diagrams. In the case of images 'simple qualities' are alike; in the case of diagrams the 'relation between the parts'. Many diagrams, of course, contain symbolic features; Peirce readily admitted this, for it was the dominant aspect of dimension of the sign which concerned him.

An index is a sign by virtue of an existential bond between itself and its object. Peirce gave several examples. 'I see a man with a rolling gait. This is a probable indication that he is a sailor. I see a bowlegged man in corduroys, gaiters and a jacket. These are probable indications that

he is a jockey or something of the sort. A sundial or clock indicates the time of day'. Other examples cited by Peirce are the weathercock, a sign of the direction of the wind which physically moves it, the barometer, the spirit-level. Roman Jakobson cites Man Friday's footprint in the sand and medical symptoms, such as pulse-rates, rashes and so on. Symptomatology is a branch of the study of the indexical sign.

The third category of sign, the symbol, corresponds to Saussure's arbitrary sign. Like Saussure, Peirce speaks of a 'contract' by virtue of which the symbol is a sign. The symbolic sign eludes the individual will. 'You can write down the word "star", but that does not make you the creator of the word, nor if you erase it have you destroyed the word. The word lives in the minds of those who use it.' A symbolic sign demands neither resemblance to its object nor any existential bond with it. It is conventional and has the force of a law. Peirce was concerned about the appropriateness of calling this kind of sign a 'symbol', a possibility which Saussure also considered but rejected because of the danger of confusion. However, it seems certain that Saussure over-restricted the notion of sign by limiting it to Peirce's 'symbolic'; moreover, Peirce's trichotomy is elegant and exhaustive. The principal remaining problem, the categorization of such so-called 'symbols' as the scales of justice or the Christian cross is one that is soluble within Peirce's system, as I shall show later.

Peirce's categories are the foundation for any advance in semiology. It is important to note, however, that Peirce did not consider them mutually exclusive. On the contrary, all three aspects frequently—or, he sometimes suggests, invariably—overlap and are co-present. It is this awareness of overlapping which enabled Peirce to make some particularly relevant remarks about photography. 'Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that in certain respects they are exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect then, they belong to the second class of signs, those by physical connection', that is, to the indexical class. Elsewhere he describes a photographic print as a 'quasi-predicate', of which the light-rays are the 'quasi-subject'.

Among European writers on semiology, Roland Barthes, in his articles on *Le Message Photographique* and *Rhétorique de l'Image*, published in *Communications* 1 and 4, reaches somewhat similar conclusions, though he does not use the category 'indexical', but sees the photographic print simply as 'iconic'. However, he describes how the photographic icon presents 'a kind of natural *being-there* of the object'. There is no human intervention, no transformation, no code, between the object and the sign; hence the paradox that a photograph is a message without a code. Christian Metz makes the transition from photography to cinema. Indeed Metz verges upon using Peirce's concepts, mediated to him through the work of André Martinet. 'A close-up of a revolver does not signify "revolver" (a purely potential lexical unit)—but signifies as a *minimum*, leaving aside its connotations, "Here is a revolver". It carries with it its own actualization, a kind of "Here is"

(“Voici”: the very word which André Martinet considers to be a pure index of actualization).’

It is curious that Metz, in his voluminous writings, does not lay much greater stress on the analysis of this aspect of the cinema, since he is extremely hostile to any attempt to see the cinema as a symbolic process which refers back to a code. In fact, obscured beneath his semiological analysis, is a very definite and frequently overt aesthetic *parti-pris*. For, like Barthes and like Saussure, he perceives only two modes of existence for the sign: natural and cultural. Moreover, he is inclined to see these as mutually exclusive, so that a language must be either natural or cultural, uncoded or coded. It cannot be both. Hence Metz’s view of the cinema turns out like a curious inverted mirror-image of Noam Chomsky’s view of verbal language; whereas Chomsky banishes the ungrammatical into outer darkness, Metz banishes the grammatical. The work of Roman Jakobson, influenced by Peirce, is, as we shall see, a corrective to both these views. The cinema contains all three modes of the sign: indexical, iconic and symbolic. What has always happened is that theorists of the cinema have seized on one or other of these dimensions and used it as the ground for an aesthetic *firmum*. Metz is no exception.

In his aesthetic preferences, Metz is quite clearly indebted to André Bazin, the most forceful and intelligent protagonist of ‘realism’ in the cinema. Bazin was one of the founders of *Cahiers du Cinéma* and wrote frequently in *Esprit*, the review founded by Emmanuel Mounier, the Catholic philosopher, originator of Personalism and the most important intellectual influence on Bazin. Many people have commented on the way in which Bazin modelled his style, somewhat abstruse, unafraid of plunging into the problems and terminology of philosophy, on that of Mounier. Bazin became interested in the cinema during his military service at Bordeaux in 1939. After his return to Paris he organized, in collaboration with friends from *Esprit*, clandestine film-shows; during the German occupation he showed films such as Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* and the banned works of Chaplin. Then, after the Liberation, he became one of the dominant figures in orienting the fantastic efflorescence of cinema culture which grew up in the clubs, in Henri Langlois’s magnificent *cinémathèques*, in the commercial cinema, where American films once again re-appeared. During this time, perhaps most important of all, Bazin developed his aesthetics of the cinema, an aesthetics antithetical to the ‘pure cinema’ of Delluc and the ‘montage’ theory of Malraux’s celebrated article in *Verve*. A new direction was taken.

Bazin’s starting-point is an ontology of the photographic image. His conclusions are remarkably close to these of Peirce. Time and again Bazin speaks of photography in terms of a mould, a death-mask, a Veronica, the Holy Shroud of Turin, a relic, an imprint. Thus Bazin speaks of ‘the lesser plastic arts, the moulding of death-masks for example, which likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a moulding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light’. Thus Bazin repeatedly stresses the existential bond between sign and object which, for Peirce

was the determining characteristic of the indexical sign. But whereas Peirce made his observation in order to found a logic, Bazin wished to found an aesthetic. 'Photography affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty'. Bazin's aesthetic asserted the primacy of the object over the image, the primacy of the natural world over the world of signs. 'Nature is always photogenic': this was Bazin's watchword.

Bazin developed a bi-polar view of the cinema. On the one hand was realism ('The good, the true, the just', as Godard was later to say of the work of Rossellini); on the other hand, was expressionism, the de-forming intervention of human agency. Fidelity to nature was the necessary touchstone of judgement. Those who transgressed, Bazin denounced: Fritz Lang's *Nibelungen*, *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*. He recognized the Wagnerian ambitions of Eisenstein's *Isaac the Terrible* and wrote: 'One can detest opera, believe it to be a doomed musical genre, while still recognizing the value of Wagner's music'. Similarly, we may admire Eisenstein, while still condemning his project as 'an aggressive return of a dangerous aestheticism'. Bazin found the constant falsification in *The Third Man* exasperating. In a brilliant article he compared Hollywood to the court at Versailles and asked where was its *Phédre*? He found the answer, justly, in Charles Vidor's *Gilda*. Yet even this masterpiece was stripped of all 'natural accident'; an aesthetic cannot be founded on an 'existential void'.

In counterposition to these recurrent regressions into expressionism, Bazin postulated a triumphal tradition of realism. This tradition began with Feuillade, spontaneously, naively, and then developed in the twenties in the films of Flaherty, Von Stroheim and Murnau, who Bazin contrasted with Eisenstein, Kuleshov and Gance. In the thirties the tradition was kept alive principally by Jean Renoir. Bazin saw Renoir stemming from the tradition of his father, that of French impressionism. Just as the French impressionists and post-impressionists—Manet, Degas, Bonnard—had re-formulated the place of the picture-frame in pictorial composition, under the influence of the snapshot, so Renoir *films* had re-formulated the place of the frame in cinematic composition. In contrast to Eisenstein's principle of montage, based on the sacrosanct close-up, the significant image centred in the frame, he had developed what Bazin called *re-cadrage* (re-framing): lateral camera movements deserted and re-captured a continuous reality. The blackness surrounding the screen masked off the world rather than framed the image. In the 1930's Jean Renoir alone 'forced himself to look back beyond the resources provided by montage and so uncover the secret of a film form that would permit everything to be said without chopping the world up into little fragments, that would reveal the hidden meanings in people and things without disturbing the unity natural to them.'

In the forties the realist tradition re-asserted itself, though divided between two different currents. The first of these was inaugurated by *Citizen Kane* and continued in the later films of Welles and of Wyler. Its characteristic feature was the use of deep focus. By this means, the

spatial unity of scenes could be maintained, episodes could be presented in their physical entirety. The second current was that of Italian neo-realism, whose cause Bazin espoused with especial fervour. Above all, he admired Rossellini. In neo-realism Bazin recognised fidelity to nature, to things as they were. Fiction was reduced to a minimum. Acting, location, incident: all were as natural as possible. Of *Bicycle Thieves* Bazin wrote that it was the first example of pure cinema. No more actors, no more plot, no more *mise en scène*: the perfect aesthetic illusion of reality. In fact, no more cinema. Thus the film could obtain radical purity only through its own annihilation. The mystical tone of this kind of argument reflects, of course, the curious admixture of Catholicism and existentialism which had formed Bazin. Yet it also develops logically from an aesthetic which stresses the passivity of the natural world rather than the agency of the human mind.

Bazin hoped that the two currents of the realist tradition—Welles and Rossellini—would one day re-converge. He felt that their separation was due only to technical limitations: deep focus required more powerful lighting than could be used on natural locations. But when Visconti's *La Terra Trema* appeared, a film whose style was for the first time the same 'both *intra* and *extra muros*', the most Wellesian of neo-realist films, nevertheless Bazin was disappointed. The synthesis, though achieved, lacked fire and 'affective eloquence'. Probably Visconti was too close to the opera, to expressionism, to be able to satisfy Bazin. But in the late forties and fifties his concept of realism did develop a step further, towards what, in a review of *La Strada*, he was to call 'realism of the person' ('*de la personne*'). The echo of Mounier was not by chance. Bazin was deeply influenced by Mounier's insistence that the interior and the exterior, the spiritual and the physical, the ideal and the material were indissolubly linked. He re-oriented the philosophical and socio-political ideas of Mounier and applied them to the cinema. Bazin broke with many of the Italian protagonists of neo-realism when he asserted that 'Visconti is neo-realist in *La Terra Trema* when he calls for social revolt and Rossellini is neo-realist in the *Fioretti* which illustrates a purely spiritual reality'. In Bresson's films Bazin saw 'the outward revelation of an interior destiny', in those of Rossellini 'the presence of the spiritual' is expressed with 'breath-taking obviousness'. The exterior, through the transparency of images stripped of all inessentials, reveals the interior. Bazin emphasized the importance of physiognomy, upon which—as in the films of Dreyer—the interior spiritual life was etched and printed.

Bazin believed that films should be made, not according to some *a priori* method or plan, but, like those of Rossellini, from 'fragments of raw reality, multiple and equivocal in themselves, whose meaning can only emerge *a posteriori* thanks to other facts, between which the mind is able to see relations.' Realism was the vocation of the cinema, not to signify but to reveal. Realism, for Bazin, had little to do with mimesis. He felt that cinema was closer to the art of the Egyptians which existed, in Panovsky's words, 'in a sphere of magical reality' than to that of the Greeks 'in a sphere of aesthetic ideality'. It was the existential bond between fact and image, world and film, which counted for most in Bazin's aesthetic, rather than any quality of similitude or resemblance

Hence the possibility—even the necessity—of an art which could reveal spiritual states. There was for Bazin a double movement of impression, of moulding and imprinting: first, the interior spiritual suffering was stamped upon the exterior physiognomy; then the exterior physiognomy was stamped and printed upon the sensitive film.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the impact of Bazin's aesthetic. His influence can be seen in the critical writing of Andrew Sarris in the United States, on the theories of Pier Paolo Pasolini in Italy, on Charles Barr's lucid article on *CinemaScope*, published in *Film Quarterly*, Summer 1963, but written in England, on Christian Metz's articles in *Communications* and *Cahiers du Cinéma*. That is to say, all the most important writing on cinema in the last ten or twenty years has, by and large, charted out the course first set by Bazin. For all these writers Rossellini occupies a central place in film history. 'Things are there. Why manipulate them?' For Metz, Rossellini's question serves as a kind of motto; Rossellini, through his experience as a film-maker, had struck upon the same truth that the semiologist achieved by dint of scholarship. Both Metz and Barr contrast Rossellini with Eisenstein, the villain of the piece. They even fall into the same metaphors. Thus Barr, writing of Pudovkin, who is used interchangeably with Eisenstein, describes how he 'reminds one of the bakers who first extract the nourishing parts of the flour, process it, and then put back some as "extra goodness": the result may be eatable, but it is hardly the only way to make bread, and one can criticize it for being unnecessary and "synthetic"'. Indeed one could extend the culinary analogy and say that the experience put over by the traditional aesthetic is essentially a *predigested* one.' And Metz: 'Prosthesis is to the leg as the cybernetic message is to the human phrase. And why not also mention—to introduce a lighter note and a change from Meccano—powered milk and Nescafé? And all the various kinds of robot?' Thus Rossellini becomes a natural wholemeal director while Eisenstein is an *ersatz*, artificial, predigested. Behind these judgements stands the whole force of Romantic aesthetics: natural v. artificial, organic v. mechanical, imagination v. fancy.

But the Rossellini v. Eisenstein antinomy is not so clear-cut as might appear. First, we should remember that for Bazin it was expressionism that was the mortal foe: *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* rather than *Battleship Potemkin* or *October*. And, then, what of a director like Von Sternberg, clearly in the expressionist tradition? 'It is remarkable that Sternberg managed to stylize performances as late into the talkies as he did.' Andrew Sarris's observation immediately suggests that Von Sternberg must be arrayed against Rossellini. Yet, in the same paragraph, Sarris comments upon Von Sternberg's eschewal of 'pointless cutting within scenes', his achievements as a 'non-montage director'. This is the same kind of problem that Bazin met with Dreyer, whom he much admired, despite rigid stylization and studio sets. 'The case of Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* is a little more subtle since at first sight nature plays a non-existent role.' Bazin found a way out of the dilemma through the absence of make-up. 'It is a documentary of faces. . . The whole of nature palpitates beneath every pore.' But his dyadic mode had been dangerously shaken.

The truth is that a triadic model is necessary, following Peirce's trichotomy of the sign. Bazin, as we have seen, developed an aesthetic which was founded upon the indexical character of the photographic image. Metz contrasts this with an aesthetic which assumes that cinema, to be meaningful, must refer back to a code, to a grammar of some kind, that the language of cinema must be primarily symbolic. But there is a third alternative. Von Sternberg was virulently opposed to any kind of realism. He sought, as far as possible, to disown and destroy the existential bond between the natural world and the film image. But this did not mean that he turned to the symbolic. Instead he stressed the pictorial character of the cinema; he saw cinema in the light, not of the natural world or of verbal language, but of painting. 'The white canvas onto which the images are thrown is a two-dimensional flat surface. It is not startlingly new, the painter has used it for centuries'. The film director must create his own images, not by slavishly following nature, by bowing to 'the fetish of authenticity', but by imposing his own style, his own interpretation. 'The painter's power over his subject is unlimited, his control over the human form and face despotic'. But 'the director is at the mercy of his camera'; the dilemma of the film director is there, in the mechanical contraption he is compelled to use. Unless he controls it, he abdicates. For 'verisimilitude, whatever its virtue, is in opposition to every approach to art.' Von Sternberg created a completely artificial realm, from which nature was rigorously excluded (the main thing wrong with *The Saga of Anatahan*, he once said, is that it contained shots of the real sea, whereas everything else was false) but which depended, not on any common code, but on the individual imagination of the artist. It was the iconic aspect of the sign which Von Sternberg stressed, detached from the indexical in order to conjure up a world, comprehensible by virtue of resemblances to the natural world, yet other than it, a kind of dream world, a heterocosm.

The contrast to Rossellini is striking. Rossellini preferred to shoot on location; Von Sternberg always used a set. Rossellini avers that he never uses a shooting-script and never knows how a film will end when he begins it; Von Sternberg cut every sequence in his head before shooting it and never hesitated while editing. Rossellini's films have a rough-and-ready, sketch-like look; Von Sternberg evidently paid meticulous attention to every detail. Rossellini uses amateur actors, without make-up; Von Sternberg took the star system to its ultimate limit with Marlene Dietrich and revelled in hieratic masks and costumes. Rossellini speaks of the director being patient, waiting humbly and following the actors until they reveal themselves: Von Sternberg, rather than wishing humbly to reveal the essence, seeks to exert autocratic control: he festoons the set with nets, veils, fronds creepers, lattices, streamers, gauze, in order, as he himself puts it 'to conceal the actors', to mask their very existence.

Yet even Von Sternberg is not the extreme: this lies in animated film usually left to one side by theorists of the cinema. But the separation is not clear-cut. Von Sternberg has recounted how the aircraft in *The Saga of Anatahan* was drawn with pen and ink. He also sprayed trees and sets with aluminium paint, a kind of extension of make-up to cover th

whole of nature, rather than the human face alone. In the same way, Max Ophuls painted trees gold and the road red in his masterpiece, *Lola Montès*. Alain Jessua, who worked with Ophuls, has described how he took the logical next step forward and, in *Comic Strip Hero*, tinted the film. John Huston has made similar experiments. And Jessua has also introduced the comic-strip into the cinema. There is no reason at all why the photographic image should not be combined with the artificial image, tinted or drawn. This is common practice outside the cinema, in advertising and in the work of artists such as El Lissitzky, George Grosz and Robert Rauschenberg.

Semiologists have been surprisingly silent on the subject of iconic signs. They suffer from two prejudices: first, in favour of the arbitrary and the symbolic, second in favour of the spoken and the acoustic. Both these prejudices are to be found in the work of Saussure, for whom language was a symbolic system which operated in one privileged sensory band. Even writing has persistently been assigned an inferior place by linguists who have seen in the alphabet and in the written letter only 'the sign of a sign', a secondary, artificial, exterior sub-system. These prejudices must be broken down. What is needed is a revival of the seventeenth century science of characters, comprising the study of the whole range of communication within the visual sensory band, from writing, numbers and algebra through to the images of photography and the cinema. Within this band it will be found that signs range from those in which the symbolic aspect is clearly dominant, such as letters and numbers, arbitrary and discrete, through to signs in which the indexical aspect is dominant, such as the documentary photograph. Between these extremes, in the centre of the range, there is a considerable degree of overlap, of the co-existence of different aspects without any evident predominance of any one of them.

In the cinema, it is quite clear, indexical and iconic aspects are by far the most powerful. The symbolic is limited and secondary. But from the early days of the film there has been a persistent, though understandable, tendency to exaggerate the importance of analogies with verbal language. The main reason for this, there seems little doubt has been the desire to validate cinema as an art. The status of photography, for instance, has always been dubious. Indeed, the leading nineteenth century protagonist of the view that photography was art, P. H. Emerson, eventually recanted and withdrew his claims. The stumbling-block, evidently, was the indexical, mechanical, purely material aspect of the photographic process. The same battle was fought out again over the cinema. Indeed, many of the detractors of film remain obstinately unvanquished. Theodor Adorno, for instance, ever in the vanguard of aesthetic reaction, writes that the cinema is self-evidently not an art. 'That the essence of film lies in merely duplicating and reinforcing what already exists, that it is glaringly superfluous and senseless even in a leisure restricted to infantility, that its duplicative realism is incompatible with its claim to be an aesthetic image—all this can be seen in the film itself, without recourse to dogmatically cited *écrits éternels*.'

Clearly, a great deal of the influence which Bazin has exerted has been

due to his ability to see the indexical aspect of the cinema as its essence—in the same way as Adorno—yet, at the same time, celebrate its status as an art. In fact, Bazin never argued the distinction between art and non-art within the cinema; his inclination was to be able to accept anything as art: thus, for example, his praise of documentary films such as *Kon-Tiki* and *Annapurna* which struck him forcefully. Christian Metz has attempted to fill this gap in Bazin's argument, but by no means with striking success. 'In the final analysis, it is on account of its wealth of connotations that a novel of Proust can be distinguished from a cookbook or a film of Visconti from a medical documentary'. Connotations however are uncoded, imprecise and nebulous: he does not believe that it would be possible to dissolve them into a rhetoric. For Metz aesthetic value is purely a matter of 'expressiveness'; it has nothing to do with conceptual thought. Here again Metz reveals the basic romanticism of his outlook.

In fact, the aesthetic richness of the cinema springs from the fact that it comprises all three dimensions of the sign: indexical, iconic and symbolic. The great weakness of almost all those who have written about the cinema is that they have taken one of these dimensions, made it the ground of their aesthetic, the 'essential' dimension of the cinematic sign, and discarded the rest. This is to impoverish the cinema. Moreover, none of these dimensions can be discounted: they are co-present. The great merit of Peirce's analysis of signs is that he did not see the different aspects as mutually exclusive. Unlike Saussure he did not show any particular prejudice in favour of one or the other. Indeed he wanted a logic and a rhetoric which would be based on all three aspects: hence his insistence on the iconic dimension of Boolean symbolic logic and his attempt to revive Euler's graphic logic. It is only by considering the interaction of the three different dimensions of the cinema that we can understand its aesthetic effect.

Exactly the same is true of verbal language which is, of course, predominantly a symbolic system. This is the dimension which Saussure illuminated so brilliantly, but to the exclusion of every other. He gave short shrift, for instance, to onomatopoeia. 'Onomatopoeia might be used to prove that the choice of signifier is not always arbitrary. But onomatopoeic formations are never organic elements of a linguistic system. Besides, their number is much smaller than in generally supposed'. In recent years, the balance has been somewhat redressed by Roman Jakobson, in line with his persistent efforts to focus attention once again on the work of Peirce. Jakobson has pointed out that whereas Saussure held that 'signs that are wholly arbitrary realize better than the others the ideal of the semiological process', Peirce believed that in the most perfect of signs the iconic, the indexical and the symbolic would be amalgamated as nearly as possible in equal proportions.

Jakobson has himself written on several occasions about the iconic and indexical aspects of verbal language. The iconic, for instance, is manifest not only in onomatopoeia, but also in the syntactic structure of language. Thus a sentence like '*Veni, vidi, vici*' reflects in its own temporal sequence that of the events which it describes. There is a

resemblance, a similitude, between the syntactic order of the sentence and the historic order of the world. Again, Jakobson points out that there is no known language in which the plural is represented by the subtraction of a morpheme whereas, of course, in very many a morpheme is added. He also investigates the role of synesthesia in language. In a brilliant article, on *Shifters, verbal categories, and the Russian verb* Jakobson discusses the indexical dimensions of language. He focuses particular attention on the pronoun, whose meaning—at one level—varies from message to message. This is because it is determined by the particular existential context. Thus when I say 'I', there is an existential bond between this utterance and myself, of which the hearer must be aware to grasp the significance of what is being said. Pronouns also have a symbolic aspect—they denote the 'source' of an utterance, in general terms—which makes them comprehensible on one level, at least, even when the actual identity of the source is unknown. The indexical aspect also comes to the fore in words such as 'here', 'there', 'this', 'that', and so on. Tenses are also indexical; they depend for full intelligibility on knowledge of the point in time at which a message was uttered.

Jakobson has also pointed out how these submerged dimensions of language become particularly important in literature and in poetry. He quotes with approval Pope's 'alliterative precept' to poets that 'the sound must seem an Echo of the sense' and stresses that poetry 'is a province where the internal nexus between sound and meaning changes from latent into patent and manifests itself most intensely and palpably'. The same is surely true, *mutatis mutandis*, of the cinema. Unlike verbal language, primarily symbolic, the cinema is, as we have seen, primarily indexical and iconic. It is the symbolic which is the submerged dimension. We should therefore expect that in the 'poetry' of the cinema, this aspect will be manifested more palpably.

In this respect, the iconography of the cinema (which, in Peirce's terms, of course, is not the same as the iconic) is particularly interesting. Metz has minimized the importance of iconography. He discusses the epoch in which good cowboys wore white shirts and bad cowboys black shirts, only in order to dismiss this incursion of the symbolic as unstable and fragile. Panovsky has also doubted the importance of iconography in the cinema. 'There arose, identifiable by standardized appearance, behaviour and attributes, the well-remembered types of the Vamp and the Straight Girl (perhaps the most convincing modern equivalents of the medieval personifications of the Vices and Virtues) the Family Man and the Villain, the latter marked by a black moustache and walking stick. Nocturnal scenes were printed on blue or green film. A checkered tablecloth meant, once for all, a "poor but honest" milieu, a happy marriage, soon to be endangered by the shadows from the past, was symbolized by the young wife's pouring the breakfast coffee for her husband; the first kiss was invariably announced by the lady's gently playing with her partner's necktie and was invariably accompanied by her kicking out her left foot.' But as audiences grew more sophisticated, and particularly after the invention of the talking film, these devices 'became gradually less necessary'. Nevertheless 'primitive symbolism' does survive, to Panovsky's pleasure, 'in such

amusing details as the last sequence of *Casablanca* where the delightfully crooked and right-minded *préfet de police* casts an empty bottle of Vichy water into the wastepaper basket'.

In fact, I think, both Metz and Panovsky vastly underestimate the extent to which 'primitive symbolism' does survive, if indeed that is the right word at all, with its hardly muffled condemnation to death. Counter to the old post-Eisenstein over-valuation of symbolism there has developed an equally strong prejudice against symbolism. Barthes, for example, has commented on the 'peripheral zone' in which a kernel of rhetoric persists. He cites, as an instance, calendar pages torn away to show the passage of time. But recourse to rhetoric, he feels, means to welcome mediocrity. It is possible to convey 'Pigalle-ness' or 'Paris-ness' with shots of neon, cigarette-girls and so on, or with boulevard cafés and the Eiffel Tower, but for us rhetoric of this kind is discredited. It may still hold good in the Chinese theatre where a complicated code is used to express, say, weeping, but in Europe 'to show one is weeping, one must weep'. And, of course, 'the rejection of convention entails a no less draconian respect for nature'. We are back in familiar territory: cinema is *pseudo-physis*, not *techné*.

Thus Roland Barthes sweeps away the American musical, *It's Always Fair Weather* and *On The Town*, condemned to mediocrity by their recourse to rhetoric to convey 'New York-ness'. And what about Hitchcock; *The Birds* or *Vertigo*? The symbolic structure of the ascent and fall in *Lola Montès*? or *La Ronde*? Welles? The sharks, the wheelchair, the hall of mirrors in *Lady from Shanghai*? Bunuel? *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*? The extraordinary symbolic scenes in the films of Douglas Sirk, *Imitation of Life* or *Written on the Wind*? Eisenstein's peacock is by no means the length and breadth of symbolism in the cinema. It is impossible to neglect this whole rich domain of meaning. Finally, what are we to say of the Vesuvian lovers in *Voyage to Italy*, the record of Hitler's voice playing among the ruins in *Germany Year Zero*, the man-eating tiger in *India*?

At this point, however, we must go forward with caution. Words such as *symbol* carry with them the risk of confusion. We have seen how Saussure's usage is not compatible with Peirce's. For Peirce the linguistic sign is a symbol, in a narrow and scientific sense. For Saussure, the linguistic sign is arbitrary, whereas 'one characteristic of the symbol is that it is never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, for there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified. The symbol of justice, a pair of scales, could not be replaced by just any other symbol, such as a chariot.' The confusion has been increased still further by Hjelmslev and the Copenhagen School. 'From the linguistic side there have been some misgivings about applying the term *symbol* to entities that stand in a purely arbitrary relationship to their interpretation. From this point of view, *symbol* should be used only of entities that are isomorphic with their interpretation, entities that are depictions or emblems, like Thorwaldsen's Christ as a symbol for compassion, the hammer and sickle as a symbol for Communism, scales as a symbol for justice, or the onomatopoeica in the sphere of language.' Hjelmslev, however, chose to use the term in a far broader application; as he put

It games, such as chess, and perhaps music and mathematics are symbolic systems, as opposed to semiotics. He suggested that there was an affinity between isomorphic symbols, such as the hammer and sickle, and the pieces in a game, pawns or bishops. Barthes complicated the issue still more by stressing that symbols had no adequate or exact meaning: 'Christianity "outruns" the cross.'

What should we say about the hammer and sickle, the Christian cross, the scales of justice? First, unlike Hjelmslev, we must distinguish clearly between a depiction or image, as Peirce would say, and an emblem. An image is predominantly iconic. An emblem however is a mixed sign, partially iconic, partially symbolic. Moreover, this dual character of the emblematic or allegorical sign can be overtly exploited: Panovsky cites the examples of Dürer's portrait of Lucas Paungartner as St George, Titian's Andrea Doria as Neptune, Reynolds's Lady Stanhope as Contemplation. Emblems are unstable, labile: they may develop into predominantly symbolic signs or fall back into the iconic. Lessing, in the *Laocöon*, saw the problem with great clarity. The symbolic or allegorical, he held, are necessary to painters but redundant to poets, for verbal language, which has priority, is symbolic in itself. 'Urania is for the poets the Muse of Astronomy; from her name, from her functions, we recognize her office. The artist in order to make it distinguishable must exhibit her with a pointer and celestial globe, this attitude of hers provides his alphabet from which he helps us to put together the name Urania. But when the poet would say that Urania has long ago foretold his death by the stars—"Ipsa diu positis letum prae-dixerat astris Urania"—why should he, thinking of the painter, add thereto, Urania, the pointer in her hand, the celestial globe before her? Would it not be as if a man who can and may speak aloud should at the same time still make use of the signs which the mutes in the Turk's seraglio have invented for lack of utterance?'

Lessing described a scale of representations between the purely iconic and the purely symbolic. The bridle in the hand of Temperance and the pillar on which Steadfastness leans are clearly allegorical. 'The scales in the hand of Justice are certainly less purely allegorical, because the right use of the scales is really a part of justice. But the lyre or flute in the hand of a Muse, the spear in the hand of Mars, the hammer and tongs in the hand of Vulcan, are not symbols at all, but mere instruments'. Painters should minimize the symbolic—the extreme case, 'the inscribed labels which issue from the mouths of the persons in ancient Gothic pictures', Lessing disapproved of entirely. He looked forward to an art which would be more purely iconic, much more than he ever anticipated: Courbet, the *plein air* painters, the Impressionists. In fact, what happened is that, as the symbolic was ousted, the indexical began to make itself felt. Painters began to be interested in optics and the psychology of perception, in the discoveries of Helmholtz and Chevreul.

Indeed, Courbet sounds strangely like Bazin: 'I maintain, in addition, that painting is an essentially *concrete* art and can only consist of the representation of *real and existing* things. It is a completely physical language, the words of which consist of all visible objects; an object

which is *abstract*, not visible, non-existent, is not within the realm of painting . . . The beautiful exists in nature and may be encountered in the midst of reality under the most diverse aspects. As soon as it is found there, it belongs to art, or rather, to the artist who knows how to see it there. As soon as beauty is real and visible, it has its artistic expression from these very qualities. Artifice has no right to amplify this expression; by meddling with it, one only runs the risk of perverting and, consequently of weakening it. The beauty provided by nature is superior to all the conventions of the artist.' One current in the history of art has been the abandonment of the lexicon of emblems provided by Andrea Alciati and Cesare Ripa and the turn to nature itself, to the existential contiguity of painter and object which Courbet demanded. At the end of this road lay photography; under its impact painting began to oscillate violently.

The iconic sign is the most labile; it observes neither the norms of convention nor the physical laws which govern the index, neither *thesis* nor *nomos*. Depiction is pulled towards the antinomic poles of photography and emblematics. Both these under-currents are co-present in the iconic sign; neither can be conclusively suppressed. Nor is it true, as Barthes avers, that the symbolic dimension of the emblematic sign is not adequate, not conceptually fixed. To say that 'Christianity "outruns" the cross' is no different in order from saying that Christianity outruns the word *Christianity* or divinity outruns the mere name of *God*. To see transcendent meanings is the task of the mystic, not the scientist. Barthes is dangerously close to Barth, with his 'impenetrable incognito' of Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that the cross can serve as a phatic signal and as a degenerate index, triggering off an effusive and devout meditation, but this should be radically distinguished from the conceptual content articulated by the symbolic sign.

It is particularly important to admit the presence of the symbolic—hence conceptual—dimension of the cinema because this is a necessary guarantee of objective criticism. The iconic is shifting and elusive; it defies capture by the critic. We can see the problem very clearly if we consider a concrete example: Christian Metz's interpretation of a famous shot from Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico!* Metz describes the heads of three peasants who have been buried in the sand, their tormented yet peaceful faces, after they have been trampled upon by the hooves of their oppressors' horses. At the denotative level the image means that they have suffered, they are dead. But there is also a connotative level: the nobility of the landscape, the beautiful, typically Eisensteinian, triangular composition of the shot. At this second level the image expresses 'the grandeur of the Mexican people, the certainty of final victory, a kind of passionate love which the northerner feels for the sun-drenched splendour of the scene.' The Italian writer on aesthetics, Galvano Della Volpe, has argued that this kind of interpretation has no objective validity, that it could never be established and argued like the paraphrasable meaning of a verbal text. There is no objective code; therefore there can only be subjective impressions. Cinema criticism, Della Volpe concludes, may exist *de facto*, but it cannot exist *de jure*.

There is no way of telling what an image *constitutes* in the sense in which Metz uses the word, even less accurate than its sense in what Peirce called 'J. S. Mill's objectionable terminology'. Della Volpe is right about this. But, like Metz, he too under-estimates the possibility of a symbolic dimension in the cinematic message, the possibility, if not of arriving at a *de jure* criticism, at least of approaching it, maximizing lucidity, minimizing ambiguity. For the cinematic sign, the language or semiotic of cinema, like the verbal language, comprises not only the indexical and the iconic, but also the symbolic. Indeed, if we consider the origins of the cinema, strikingly mixed and impure, it would be astonishing if it were otherwise. Cinema did not only develop technically out of the magic lantern, the Daguerreotype, the phenakistoscope and similar devices—its history of realism—but also out of strip-cartoons, Wild West shows, automata, pulp novels, barn-storming melodramas, magic—its history of the narrative and the marvellous. Lumière and Méliès are not like Cain and Abel; there is no need for one to eliminate the other. It is quite misleading to validate one dimension of the cinema unilaterally at the expense of all the others. There is no pure cinema, grounded on a single essence, hermetically sealed from contamination.

This explains the value of a director like Jean-Luc Godard, who is unafraid to mix Donen and Kelly with Kant and Hegel, Eisensteinian montage with Rossellinian realism, words with images, professional actors with historical people, Lumière with Méliès, the documentary with the iconographic, images with emblems. More than anybody else Godard has realized the fantastic possibilities of the cinema as a medium of communication and expression. In his hands, as in Peirce's perfect sign, the cinema has become an almost equal amalgam of the symbolic, the iconic and the indexical. His films have conceptual meaning, pictorial beauty and documentary truth. It is no surprise that his influence should proliferate among directors throughout the world. The film-maker is fortunate to be working in the most semiologically complex of all media, the most aesthetically rich. We can repeat today Abel Gance's words four decades ago: 'The Time of the image has come.'

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The Budget, Gold and the Incomes Policy

Ken Tarbuck

This year's budget was the most severe and deflationary of any since the end of the last war. Altogether, it withdrew nearly £1,000 million of spending power from the economy—an unprecedented amount. The devaluation of last November, the January cuts in Government spending, and the budget in March may produce a fall in living standards of the British working class of an order not seen since the 1920's. Estimates of the rise in the cost of living arising from devaluation ranged from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. The budget has added further considerable burdens; estimates of the overall cost of living increase for 1968 are now in the order of 8 or 9 per cent. One only has to contrast this with the Government's norm for wage increases— $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Even allowing for the expected 5 per cent rise in wage rates in the first six months of this year (due to the bulge arising from the period of restraint last year) this will not compensate for the increase in prices. Of course wage rates and earnings are not the same thing. Only a minority of wage earners today take home wages as low as the official minimum rates—their take home pay depends on bonus, piece rates and so on. In the coming months there is every possibility that these take-home wages will either be stable or fall. Therefore the price increases will hit harder than bourgeois economists would have us believe. Nor is this all. Along with the slowdown in housing and other social services, there is the threat of unemployment for those in work and little prospect for those now unemployed of finding work. The British working-class is going to suffer.

How does gold come into the picture? The recent turmoil that led to a two tier system of prices for gold may be seen as an indication of the international character of the crisis besetting capitalism. There can be little doubt that the long boom enjoyed by capitalism since the beginning of the fifties is now over, and capitalism is once again displaying most of the features that bourgeois pundits claimed it had lost. Rising unemployment, reduction of the social services, and government retrenchment are now common to many capitalist countries, not something peculiar to Britain. They have been accompanied by persistent international inflation. The USA has contributed to this problem by its massive balance of payments deficit. This deficit arises from two sources: a) the export of capital, much of it to Western Europe and b) its overseas military expenditure. It has been financed by other capitalist countries holding dollar reserves. So long as such (paper) dollars were assumed to be as good as gold, i.e. interchangeable with gold, there was not too much concern. However, over the last few years the US gold stock has been steadily drained by conversions, thus throwing into question the ability of the US to meet its obligations for

gold. Hence the flight from the dollar into gold (which of course put further pressure on the dollar). This flight was not so much precipitated by the devaluation of the pound, rather it was accelerated and thus reached crisis proportions earlier than might have otherwise been the case. Since both the pound and the dollar have acted as the twin international currencies since 1945, the pound acted as the first line of defence for the dollar.

It was clear that the 14 per cent devaluation of Sterling would not take effect in the uncertain international climate, unless the British balance of payments was corrected fairly rapidly. Further speculation against the pound could only be staved off if this was done. Given the logic of the situation and the strategy pursued by the Labour Government, the April budget was the inevitable outcome. This budget had to do a number of things. Its first task was to correct the balance of payments, and so allay the speculators. Secondly, it had to help ward off the attack on the dollar, because any further devaluation of the pound would have inevitably led to the devaluation of the dollar. Thirdly, the budget—by deflating the economy—had to produce more unemployment. This is an important element because the present policy of the Government is based upon the assumption that there will be an export-led boom at the end of the year, and it wants to create the capacity to meet this. It is now quite obvious that the expectation is that even when such a boom gets under way there will still be a pool of unemployment to act as a deterrent on the labour market.

British capitalism urgently needs to keep its labour costs down in the coming period so that it can meet the international economic competition that is becoming much fiercer than at any time since the thirties. Therefore, along with the budget the Government has decided to reinforce its unemployment policy with the whip of the Prices and Incomes Act. This is necessary because even when there is a large number of unemployed, wages in some industries still go up: very often the regional variations in unemployment occur in such a way as to reduce the pressures in the labour market in certain areas and industries. Therefore the Act will have to be used to stop any group of workers using a propitious situation which may arise because of export demand from obtaining wage increases. The Act is thus a further attack on basic trade union rights.

This struggle for basic trade union rights is a crucial one for the whole of the British trade union movement. It will not be a struggle about 'abstract' principles, but a very concrete one for nearly every worker concerning his living standards. As prices march steadily upwards, so will the industrial temperature.

Now that Lord Carron has been laid to rest in the Bank of England we may expect the Engineers to be in the forefront of this battle. But this struggle will not only be with the employers and the Government, the workers will have to reassert their own control over the trade unions. One can see this developing within the ENU. Within this context the demand for 'workers' control over workers organizations' becomes a vital one.

discussion

Rolling Stones

Both accounts of the music of the Rolling Stones offered in NLR 47 seem to evade the question of how good the songs are as music, by evaluating them according to external, non-musical values. Both adopt different kinds of moralistic approach towards them. Beckett's a psychological one, Merton's a political one. Speaking, for instance, of the Stones' 'celebration' of sexual exploitation, Merton writes: 'Nakedly proclaimed, (sexual) inequality is *de facto* denounced.' What can *de facto* mean here, and who does the denouncing? Merton seems to mean that by presenting us with a blatant and undisguised statement of male domination and exploitation, which is usually expressed only in confused or concealed ways, the Stones give it to us in a form in which we can recognize it clearly for what it is, and so denounce it. There does not seem to be any grounds for assuming the Stones themselves, in their performance, adopt a critical attitude towards it. Merton's interpretation of his experience of listening to the music according to his own perspective—in terms of a critique of the values of advanced industrial capitalist society—is quite extraneous to the music itself.

Beckett falls into another kind of moralism when he assesses the music in terms of its effect on the listener: he speaks of the 'momentary, complete identification' of aggressive feeling which 'can have a constructive, liberating effect on the individual'. His account of how, through fulfilment in fantasy, feelings of arrogance and narcissism can be 'incorporated' and 'transmuted' by the listener may be accurate psychologically, but he also fails to deal with the songs as music. To talk about feeling as such, instead of about the way it is presented and realized in music, is again to adopt an external standpoint.

Both of these accounts concentrate on the words, with only an occasional reference to the way the music presents or underlines them. To speak as if the words were the primary element and the music subsidiary to them is to reduce the impact and oversimplify the complexity of feeling of which words and music together are capable. It is true that

in much pop music, the music is not closely interrelated with the words but is a mechanical and standardized vehicle for them. But there are cases, in the Stones' work, in which this standardization of form is itself exploited. In *'Paint it black'* for example, the relentlessly unvarying 4-line verse reinforces the feeling of oppressed, suicidal depression in the words, and at the one point where the words seem to suggest a possibility of recovery, the music does not let up. It is by putting the repetitive and mechanical features of pop music to such use that the Stones occasionally raise them to a new level of expressiveness. Elsewhere—as in *'Satisfaction'*—there is a real fusion of words and music. This song acquires its particular force from the slow triplet rhythm of the opening words, which goes against and frustrates the flow of the 4-time beat: a straightforward enough procedure, but in the context of the predominantly uncomplicated beat of pop music, a graphic dislocation. This is the specific means which make it, as Merton rightly says, a 'precise musical notation of grinding physical blockage.' Here are examples of words and music reinforcing each other. But there are other examples in which the interaction of several dimensions, and the tension generated between them when the music contradicts the surface meaning of the words, are essential to the total experience. In *'Backstreet Girl'* the complexity of feeling is the result of the contradiction between the overtly arrogant and patronising words and the gentle tenderness of the melody. Brecht wrote somewhere that what was needed, in the theatre, was music which could call forth a feeling so precisely that actors could play *against* it: here is a simple case of exactly that. By going against the overt meaning of the words the music here offsets them and transforms their impact into something quite different. Alone, the words would be merely patronising. It is the musical setting—an amplification and articulation of the way feeling can be expressed to some extent in gesture or tone of voice—which makes this song a confrontation between tenderness and arrogance towards the girl. Its success lies in capturing and realising this opposition of feelings with such accuracy and subtlety of nuance, and fusing them into a musical whole.

A critical account of pop music must be based, not on judgements of the feelings and attitudes expressed (In this respect, to applaud the Stones for their attitude is just as irrelevant to their music as to berate them for their clothes or their behaviour), but on an assessment of how these feelings are embodied in musical forms—i.e. how coherently the musical material is presented and articulated. If the material of pop music is restricted, in comparison with other forms of music, the doesn't necessarily mean the possibilities for coherence and articulation within its own limits are less. Any attempt to talk about it as music—and to treat it any other way is, finally, to devalue it—must begin with the specific materials and conventions it employs, and discuss how its use of these is able to provide convincing *symbolic*, not literal presentations of experience.

Michael Parson

reviews

Industrial Democracy in Great Britain

John Eaton

'To develop a strategy of advance' say the authors of this book¹ 'is the crucial task of the left today.' (page 407). It is in the search for such a strategy that a new interest in industrial democracy and workers' control has arisen. This was evident at the Nottingham Conference on Workers' Control which was held this March and attended by nearly 500 delegates. The resolution passed at this Conference called for 'Workers everywhere . . . to form Workers' Control Groups to develop democratic consciousness . . . extending workers' control over industry and the economy itself, through uniting Workers' Control Groups into a national force in the Socialist movement.'

'Have we not been here before?' I was asking myself. I had already begun to delve into working class history when the appearance of this admirable book lightened the task. Ken Coates and Anthony Topham have been amongst the main architects of the new Workers' Control Movement and in this book are explicitly directing their learning in support of this important political activity—one that may well be the most significant growth point in the British Labour Movement today.

The authors tell the history of workers' control in Britain by inviting the main protagonists in the debate since 1910 to speak for themselves. Valuable but brief comments, accounting for less than one-sixth of the whole book, link and explain the setting of some 125 extracts averaging about two or three pages each.

After a short review of the nineteenth century lineage of the movement, Section 1 deals primarily with the rise and fall of Guild Socialism and Syndicalism; Section 2 deals with the Shop Stewards' Movement from its origin during World War I through to 1964; Section 3, on Industrial Democracy and Nationalization, surveys early attitudes beginning with the Syndicalists (who opposed nationalization) and the Guild Socialists (who supported it if, and only if, it gave workers a part in management) and follows the argument through to 1964; Section 4 deals with the 'New Movement 1964-67' in which the pressure for industrial democracy in the nationalized industries is mounting, secrecy in business is coming under attack and a new awakening is apparent in a number of the trade unions.

¹ *Industrial Democracy in Great Britain — A book of readings and witnesses for workers' control*, Ken Coates and Anthony Topham. Macgibbon & Kee 1968. XXXVI. + 431 pp.

A ground swell has begun, but the political content of the new movement is still far from clear. It is just for this reason that this book is of such value; it will help Socialists to think out the theoretical implications of the movement. More theoretical work is badly needed for example, on the relationship of workers' control to the economic and political organization of socialist societies. We need to know more about the theory and practice of workers' control abroad. A critical study of the Minority Movement in Britain would be relevant; and so forth.

Without a clear theory the movement for workers' control cannot grow; it will lack cohesion; it will become an easy prey to employers who want to use it or, recoiling from this danger, pursue unrealistic demands and become divorced from the mass support without which it will have no point or purpose.

There is no better way of trying to focus ideas than 'communing with the past', and here this book provides a text of practical value. It must however, be admitted, I think, that in important respects the lessons of the past are negative. James Connolly, with his uncanny power of combining depth with originality, wrote way back in 1908 '... they who are engaged in building up industrial organizations for the practical purposes of today are at the same time preparing the framework of the society of the future. It is the realisation of that fact that indeed marks the emergence of Socialism as a revolutionary force from the critical to the positive stage.' Very little has in fact been done to explore two fundamental ideas thrown out by James Connolly (see pages 10 to 14), namely, that the institutional basis of socialism must be industrial and not territorial and that realisation of this fact marks the emergence of Socialism 'from the critical to the positive stage'. Antonio Gramsci followed similar lines of thought in 1919-20 in relation to the Workers' Councils in Italy. However, these very important ideas from the standpoint of Marxism seem to have been left to lie dormant presumably since it was assumed that they were relevant only to a situation of revolutionary upsurge when working class power in the Central Government seemed to be on the order of the day. But if the claim of Socialism is that the workers can run industry democratically and more competently than the capitalists, is it not possible—as a way of exposing capitalist administration and building up a consciousness among workers of socialist aims—to establish groups in factories, mines, hospitals and so on, to criticise capitalist administration concretely by formulating alternative policies and to demand that workers' control should rank above shareholders' control? It is not difficult to show that workers on the job are far better qualified than absentee owners to protect the community's interests. There are many other aspects, of course, to be considered—such as the special interest of the workers as recipients of part of their own product in the form of wages; co-ordination with other enterprises; the compatibility of workers' control with private ownership of capital; the possibility of sustaining interest in complex time-taking work which seems to 'get nowhere' against the hard facts of social power. In general, is it possible to try to foreshadow a new socialist structure by fighting for

some first nuclei of it within a capitalist society? There are many such questions on which not much light comes from the past. But to discuss these one must first take up the argument from the past. It is because it does so that this book is to be strongly commended to everyone on the Left who is seeking a new strategy of advance. It will contribute to a move forward out of the past into a new future.

Strategy of the Vietnamese Liberation

Douglas Gill

Military success brings with it new problems for the NLF. The forces of the US and its allies are now concentrated in the cities, the bases, and in the provinces adjacent to the border; vast areas of the countryside have therefore been completely freed. With the Americans abandoning the countryside to the NLF, the latter's methods of guerrilla and of mobile war, so useful against isolated garrisons and outposts, against convoys and patrols, can have no substantial further application. A different type of warfare then begins—has indeed for some time begun—to show itself: the warfare of positions. The writings of the Vietnamese themselves provide an indication of how the war may now unfold.

In a work entitled *The Resistance Will Win*, written more than twenty years ago, at a time when the war against the French had hardly emerged from its rudimentary opening stages, Truong Chinh set down the strategy by which the Vietnamese were directing their resistance. The guiding principle of their strategy was to prolong the war—simply because, in terms of immediate military capacity, they were so much weaker than the French. The strategy of lengthening the war, however, by no means affected the tactics of any individual battle or campaign; these consisted in first concentrating their forces, in launching lightning attacks and in then dispersing quickly. If the Viet Minh had to content itself with the methods of guerrilla and of mobile war (the one a method of fighting in small groups which, while harassing the enemy, could merge easily with the local population: the other a method of gathering guerrilla forces into highly manoeuvrable larger groups), it was not because in principle it eschewed the warfare of positions (digging trenches, setting up fortifications); rather that, being underarmed in relation to the French, to apply hastily such a form of war was 'to doom ourselves to failure'.

The account given by General Giap in 1961 of the fall of Dien Bien Phu describes the manner by which the Viet Minh eventually had recourse to the warfare of positions. The problem arose in the summer of 1953. With the next season of campaigning then not far away, General Navarre and the French and American general staffs examined the position in which the French expeditionary corps had placed itself. Its forces were dispersed in innumerable small posts and garrisons, and no longer retained a sufficiently large and mobile force with which to

contain the attacks of the regular army fielded by the Viet Minh. They were faced with a dilemma. If they gathered in their forces and regrouped them in a powerful mobile force, the guerrillas would inevitably profit, and large tracts of the countryside would at once be lost. And if, on the other hand, the forces remained dispersed in their positions they might, for the time being, occupy a more sizeable terrain, but the threat posed by the Viet Minh regulars would continue undiminished.

The solution which Navarre chose has a familiar ring. He would greatly develop the indigenous forces at his disposal, and use them to relieve his superior European and African troops; the latter could then be suitably regrouped. To this end, Navarre established 34 new battalions of Vietnamese auxiliaries, and, with the opening of the winter-spring campaigning season of 1953-54, began to concentrate strong forces in the South. He would take the offensive in a zone in which the Viet Minh might be brought to battle.

The problems faced by the Viet Minh were not easy ones. Should they concentrate their own forces in response, and give battle in the delta? Or should they transfer them elsewhere, and launch an offensive of their own? In particular, should they concentrate against Dien Bien Phu, a fortified encampment not only adjudged impregnable by French and Americans alike, but requiring for its conquest a type of warfare—positional—of which their own forces had small experience—and on a scale of which they had no experience at all? The camp was the strongest in the Indo-Chinese theatre. The considerations which weighed most strongly in favour of its siege, however, were the following: first, the location of the camp, in a region both mountainous and wooded; and second, the dependence of the camp upon supply by air. The enemy could display no initiative at all, and would have to take to the defensive in case of serious attack. Most important, an energetic attack upon the camp would at once render useless all French engagements in the south, as aviation and reinforcements were despatched for operations in the north.

The main decision once taken, another problem now arose. Should the camp be rapidly attacked, before the reinforcements thrown in had time to place themselves securely in position. Or should the siege be undertaken slowly? Giap indicates that it was the lack of experience of the troops at their command which weighed most heavily with the Viet Minh. A quick attack might succeed with smaller losses. But there again, it might not succeed at all; in that case, the cause would suffer a most important setback. Accordingly, a slow build-up of forces and the creation of an extensive system of trenches and fortifications were decided upon. The French had some knowledge of this build-up, but remained confident that they could hold off all attack and it was not until shortly after they had opened their own spring offensive in the south that the attack on Dien Bien Phu began.

²⁰ *Great Victory, Big Task*,¹ the latest work of General Giap to be placed before us, was not originally destined for volume publication (an-

¹ General Giap: *Great Victory, Big Task*, Pall Mall Press, 1968

more than was his *People's War, People's Army*, or the work of Truong Chinh, both of which consisted of essays written at different periods of time and only placed together at a later date). It started life as a series of articles in the newspaper *Nhan Dan* in September, 1967. It lacks the lucidity of his earlier work, and is to a considerable extent exhortative in character. But such are the laws of copyright and the customs of intelligence that the articles, crudely and anonymously translated, are now available in English. Given the stage which the war in Vietnam has reached today, they may be usefully read in the light of Giap's earlier analysis of the campaign against the French; of the offensive, that is, which the French hoped to wage in the winter-spring of 1953-54, and of the manner by which the Viet Minh saw to its destruction.

The author sees the fundamental American defeat as having taken place in the early part of 1965. The subsequent massive reinforcements and the extension of the war to the North enabled the United States to launch two strategic counter-offensives in an attempt to remedy the situation. The first, with the introduction of 180,000 US troops, began in October 1965 and continued through the 1965-66 dry season: it was repulsed. The second strategic counter-offensive took place in the 1966-67 dry season and marked an altered conception of the war. The expanded American forces alone would undertake the operations against the main forces of the NLF, while Saigon's enfeebled regulars would attempt pacification in the areas thus cleared. The second offensive was no less decisively thrown back. Operations such as Cedar Falls and Junction City either failed to 'flush out' anybody at all, or were thwarted and frustrated. Overall, the offensive was thrown onto the defensive as counter counter-offensives were unloosed by the NLF.

The significance of Giap's analysis of these two years of war becomes clear when one recalls the date of publication of the articles in Vietnam—shortly before the onset of the 1967-68 campaigning season. The months after they were published saw no American strategic counter-offensive on the pattern of those which hitherto had occurred annually. The initiative has passed wholly to the other side. The Americans, extended through every portion of the country, were too weak to hold any one position, and the forces of the NLF, switching operations from south to north at will, creating threats to which the US forces could only belatedly respond. The American command moved northwards such forces as it could, and thereby relinquished any hold upon the delta; it denuded even the garrisons of the towns and cities which, politically, it had hoped to hold above all else.

In the situation in which the United States finds itself today, as Giap cogently points out, the throwing in of reinforcements will not of itself permit the regaining of an initiative which has so decisively been lost. The disembarkation of further US troops gives an even more intensively American flavour to the war. 'Yet, the more the war . . . is Americanised, the more disintegrated the puppet Saigon army and administration becomes.' No less certainly, such reinforcement, in a situation where all room for initiative is lost, permits only the further scattering of forces as the attempt is made to defend every position whose loss would constitute a set-back. Moreover the author, writing

in the summer of 1967 and hearing of the plan to build a barrier along the line between the north and south, makes the accurate prognostication that its result would be as follows: 'us troops would become more scattered and would be trapped in an inert and defensive situation. A subtle contradiction is thus manifested: the earnest wish of the Americans to stave off the loss of further areas of land, to bolster up a régime whose morale is broken and whose force is shattered, when carried into action only undermines the cause it is intended to support. Again, a reinforcement intended to prevent a state of passive and inert defence only leads to the spread of this condition.

Just as the strategy of the Vietnamese remains unchanging, so does that of the enemy with whom they are engaged. Westmoreland's strategy was no less, nor more, intelligent than that with which Navarre proposed to win the war. Navarre's offensive in the south left Dien Bien Phu insufficiently protected. The us concentration in the north against the threat of infiltration led to the denuding of the delta regions. The protection and fortification of the bases left insufficient forces in the towns.

Until the spring of 1954, because the Viet Minh were weaker than the French, they sought to concentrate their own forces in directions which the enemy had left unguarded. They welcomed the concentration of his forces in encampments such as Dien Bien Phu. Only in 1954 did they feel strong enough to attack the greatest base itself. The campaign in Vietnam today has reached a stage both like and unlike the situation in late 1953. The similarities are evident. About a third of the American active forces are gathered in the north, and equivalent proportions protect the towns and the remaining bases. There are thus insufficient troops to occupy the countryside, or even to engage the main forces of the NLF. What is to be done? With the departure of Westmoreland another round of warfare à la Navarre is in process of beginning. There is talk of creating further large forces to fight for the régime in Saigon—an undertaking on which Giap said the last word eight years ago, in reference to the situation in 1953: 'Reinforcement of the Vietnamese auxiliary troops will only increase numbers quantitatively at the expense of their quality.' But if the Navarre strategy seriously threatens the Viet Minh and compelled them to offer a decisive battle—at Dien Bien Phu—the present situation makes no such countermove necessary on the part of the National Liberation Front. There are no main forces whom the Americans can group together to undertake a strong offensive: all are fully engaged on the frontier, the cities and the bases. The countryside has been abandoned. Nor can vast reinforcements be forthcoming from the United States itself: the change in the American command and the decision of the President not to seek re-election are both related to the failure in the war; both are indications of demoralisation, of the lack of any idea at all of what to do. In this sense, then, the situation is quite unlike that which France faced in 1953, when the confident Navarre, still deploying large forces and with a determined government at home behind him, could launch an offensive which placed the Viet Minh in a difficult position—which forced them, in fact, to the decisive battle of the war. Today, the United States can display no such initiative at all. Perhaps a calamity on the scale of Dien Bien

Phu has not occurred, but defeat is no less certain or far-reaching. Some campaigns find fitting endings in battles such as Waterloo; others, like the defeat of Germany in 1918—it does not even have a name—merely fizzle out as one side finally gives way.

Jon Halliday

Kennan's Memoirs

George Kennan prefaces his remarkable memoirs¹ with an exemplary self-critical account of his background and early environment, with its attendant psychological effects. Historically and socially, George Kennan was an 'outsider', ill at ease in the 20th century, and ill at ease with its ideas, particularly marxism ('something to which I could not relate myself personally either by my own experience or by that of the family'). One of the two influences behind his decision to go to Princeton (which he lived through in a state of almost permanent psychological depression) was Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*. From Princeton he moved into the newly established Foreign Service. After an abortive attempt at leaving it, he embarked on a career as a Russian expert, first from outside the Soviet Union, and subsequently in Moscow, whither he travelled with Bullitt, the first American ambassador, immediately on the reopening of relations between the USA and the USSR. Bullitt seems to have been one of the few American officials for whom Kennan had genuine respect; even Radek and Bukharin used to drop by the embassy to talk to him in the early days. Later Kennan had to serve under less estimable figures, such as Mr Bert Fish, a political appointee from Florida, who was head of the Lisbon mission in 1942. Fish lived in his bedroom, and had not had one single meeting with the Portuguese leaders since his arrival. Kennan pressured him hard to meet Salazar, particularly because of the American need for bases in the Azores, but Fish could not be moved. 'Ah ain't goin' down there and get mah backsides kicked around . . . He's too smaht for me.' Caught between an ignorant and unpredictable State Department on the one side and equal hazards such as the OSS scheme to organize a revolt against Salazar in the Azores, Kennan makes planned diplomacy sound like a non-stop nightmare. Weeks after the Tehran Conference the American delegation to the European Advisory Commission in London had not been told what had transpired at Tehran.

What is so odd about the book is that, though Kennan blatantly despises much of American policy, he never once broaches the question of what American aims are. American policy and its agents are frequently criticised, but it is always assumed implicitly that America is fundamentally *right*: this is not challenged once. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, although Kennan admits to great sympathy with the Russian people and all that, is automatically assumed always to be wrong and its policy evil. The two main theses of Kennan's book are that America should use her power scientifically and that she should

¹ George Kennan, *Memoirs*: Hutchinson, 65s.

never have compromised herself so far with the USSR. 'Never did consider the Soviet Union a fit ally or associate, actual or potential, for this country.' Kennan was against the Nuremberg trials, and against Russian participation in them: 'to admit to such a procedure a Soviet judge . . . was to make a mockery of the only purpose the trials could conceivably serve, and to assume, by association, a share of the responsibility for Stalinist crimes.' The core of Kennan's ideological outlook is best seen in his description of the formulation of the Marshall plan. This was conceived scientifically as a means of applying America's superiority—viz. her great wealth—directly on the Soviet Union's weakness—her lamentable economic condition after the war—in order to affect the political superstructures. The Marshall Plan was a challenge to 'competition', ostensibly on a basis of equality, but in fact in conditions of extreme inequality. Kennan knew that the Russians could not accept this kind of challenge on the terms laid down by the US; their reaction he calculated would be *defensive*, and would take such forms as attempting to safeguard the East German regime by isolating West Berlin, and abandoning compromise in Czechoslovakia. This would both put socialism as an ideology in a bad light in the Western countries and create more difficult conditions for the actual construction of socialist societies in the East, by thrusting them into an artificially self-contained group cut off from free intercourse with the rest of the world (p. 379, 401). Kennan was, of course, too clever. Official Washington was unable to appreciate that the Berlin and Prague events were defensive reactions to a successful American initiative. The misfired diplomatic genius had set off the inexorable dialectic of ignorance and thuggery which soon produced the abomination of NATO—America's crude defensive reaction, Kennan suggests, at a time when no such defensiveness was called for. This highlights the underlying contradictions which Kennan never tackles: not only what were America's motives, but also what were the effects of her actions? This side of the equation of cold war competition is simply evaded—yet it is essential that it be filled in because, as it stands at present, Kennan's case is a cold war argument—America v. Russia. The struggle should be waged scientifically, he says, because America (despite what it thinks) is vastly superior to the USSR in everything that counts. But her superiority, other than in firepower, is never defined. Russia emerges as a loathsome enemy, America as a mass of bumbling officialdom. It is a curious position for one so intelligent, depending as it does on an almost purely negative standpoint. This is a position rather akin to that of Walter Lippmann: America is assumed to have a right to intervene wherever she can do so successfully and without over-extending herself, but rarely praised as a civilization. Kennan was against the Truman Doctrine because (unlike the Marshall Plan) it was an unscientific, open-ended commitment. He has recently come out for Eugene McCarthy with a critical position on Vietnam—on the grounds that it is an unscientific application of American power. At least this avoids the maudlin moralizing of American liberalism, but it is important to realize that this stance can at no point rejoin any socialist critique. On the contrary, were American politics run by people such as George Kennan, and not Wilbur Mills, Dean Rusk and Mendel Rivers, the road to socialism, particularly in Europe, would be even more arduous than it is today.

short notes

David Horowitz ed.: *Containment and Revolution: Western Policy Towards Social Revolution, 1917 to Vietnam* (Studies in Imperialism and the Cold War No 1), Anthony Blond, 35s. hardback 15s. paperback.

This is the first volume of a welcome series on imperialism and the Cold War, a period whose history the editor rightly notes in his introduction drastically needs rewriting, and must be rewritten by the Left. Not only has the epoch itself been very much the prerogative of conservative writers, but the mentality of the period has given its name to a whole generation of falsifiers and ideologues, collectively known as 'cold war historians'. Moreover, it is a truism that left-wing intellectuals in particular are extremely weak on their history. How can events in Greece be understood without a real knowledge of the history of the 'forties? (admirably presented by Todd Gitlin). How many people remember in detail the continuous hostility of *all* the western countries to the Soviet Union right from the very start? (minutely chronicled by William Appleman Williams: *American Intervention in Russia: 1917-20*). Who knows anything about the recent history of China? (John Gittings: *The Origins of China's Foreign Policy*). Or the internal nature of the Vietnamese Revolution? (Richard Morrock: *Revolution and Intervention in Vietnam*). The areas of historical ignorance go much wider, and it is to be hoped that the series will continue to encroach on further terrain. Of one hundred admirers and denigrators of Gaullism, it is unlikely that one could give a coherent account of the movement's history or the ideological trajectory of its leader.

The volume has a balanced mix of area studies (four) and more general essays—Isaac Deutscher on *The Myths of the Cold War* (a revised version of a speech at the Berkeley Teach-in on Vietnam in May 1965); John Bagguley on *The World War and the Cold War*, an excellent analysis of the relationship between post-war policies and wartime strategy; and finally a brief essay on Senator Taft's Critique of Containment. This volume is a rare event: a political book about modern history by radical authors for radical readers.

Oswald Stack

Rudolf L. Tökés: *Béla Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic*, Pall Mall Press, 54s.

This book fills one of the lacunae in the history of the revolutionary period from 1917 to 1920; unfortunately, Marxist scholarship has once again been forestalled by an American Foundation. In this case, the reasons are fairly clear. Orthodox Communist historiography outlawed the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919 by denying it the status of a true Communist revolution. Since Stalin's death and the 20th Congress, though Kun has been cautiously rehabilitated, his political position in the 20's is far from attuned to present preoccupations of European Communist Parties. Luckily enough, Tökés, educated in Budapest before emigrating to the USA in 1956, in general merely restores the earlier Comintern analysis of the failure of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, which historically justified the 21 points and Lenin's *Left-wing Communism*. The Hungarian Communist Party was not founded until after the bourgeois-democratic revolution of November 1918; it united a syndicalist group earlier associated with Ervine Szabó 'revolutionary technocrats',

a second generation of anarcho-syndicalists, leaders of the old 'socialist opposition', unattached intellectuals (the most significant of whom was Lukács) and, most important of all, prisoners-of-war who had participated in the October Revolution in Russia and been especially trained by the Comintern. This last group, led by Béla Kun, predominated in the first cc of the HCP, and it was their tactical skill and experience which finally brought down Károlyi's Bourgeois-socialist government on the occasion of the Vyr not in March 1919, and replaced it peacefully by a Socialist-Communist coalition. But from this point on, Kun's tactical resourcefulness seems to have deserted him; he allowed the Socialists to dissolve the HCP, leaving power in the hands of the right-wing trade unions. He failed to see the significance of Lenin's agrarian strategy, and insisted on an orthodox Marxist policy of land nationalization, which alienated the peasantry. He failed to enlist bourgeois support for the Republic by exploiting the nationalist conjuncture which brought him to power, and bungled negotiations with the Entente by being aggressive when he ought to have been conciliatory and vice versa. And he weakened the Red Army by disrupting production through mistime nationalization of industry. These mistakes, the product both of slavish imitation of the Bolsheviks and of a naively chauvinist belief that Hungary's more 'advanced' economy obviated Russian 'compromises' with the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, were made in a much more delicate external situation than that of the Russians—with no space to retreat into, encirclement by imperialist powers no longer at war with one another, and the impossibility of Russian Soviet military assistance at the crucial moment. All this is well described and documented by Tótkés. He is at his weakest in describing the left opposition in the HCP, and its significance for later Comintern positions. But we can all endorse his last sentence: 'The ideology of a Communist party is only as viable as the party's awareness of past mistakes and its willingness to bring this knowledge to bear on its current predicament.'

B.J.

Keith Buchanan: *The Southeast Asian World*, Bell, 27s. 6d.

Jerrold Schecter: *The New Face of Buddha*, Gollancz, 45s.

Modestly sub-titled 'an introductory essay', *The Southeast Asian World* accomplishes the extraordinary feat of both providing a mass of information on all the countries in the area and explaining how study of the zone can be approached scientifically by a general reader. This is a tribute to Buchanan's method, and his ability to use several disciplines. He introduces nutrition density as opposed to population density—which for an apparently sparse populated country like Laos gives a density of nearly 500 people per square mile of cultivated land. He rightly prefers Chesneaux's 'pre-developed' to the widespread and misleading 'under-development'. He explains why intensive farming in Asia does not mean the same as intensive farming in Europe, and the relative values of the various factors involved are completely jumble. There is an excellent description of the ecological effects of swidden agriculture; and a highly informative passage on malaria—from which it emerges surprisingly, that it is much worse in the hill areas than in the lowlands. There are rapid sketches of all the countries—those on Burma and Malaya being particularly valuable. Burma is helpfully broken down into six areas, and the condition of minorities and separatism is well discussed; the weakness of the economy is demonstrated by the fact that rice has risen from 50 per cent exports (by value) in 1938 to 75 per cent in 1962. Similarly, for Malaya, there is a very useful description of the lay-out of the population (including the surprising information that two-thirds of Malaya is occupied by indigenous peoples such as the Semang and the Sakai), and of how the population distribution relates to the areas of development (which are largely non-Malay).

Laos' desperate condition is well revealed by the fact that in 1963 imports were 40 times the value of exports; yet the country contains one of the most important iron ore deposits in Asia at Xieng Khouang, which is completely undeveloped. Buchanan is also very good on the pattern of development created in the area by its high degree of accessibility by water. There is a succinct discussion of the political significance of the cell-like structure of the local civilizations, and of the non-urban base of nationalism in Vietnam: 'the traditional picture, which contrasts the conservatism of the peasantry with the progressive, even revolutionary, quality of the urban élite thus has no validity in Vietnam for the roles are reversed'. There are a lot of annotated photographs and excellent maps (the map of the Mekong river project and its accompanying critical note are exemplary); and in addition there is a selected bibliography, including novels and poetry, with paperbacks marked by asterisks. This is a model volume on a crucial storm centre of our age.

The New Face of Buddha is about the same area, but the treatment is somewhat different. Jerrold Schecter is the head of the *Time-Life* Tokyo bureau—which is what gives the book its interest: it is the bare bones of American bewilderment, expressed in a highly politicized yet utterly unmethodical manner, faced with the variegated spectrum of anti-imperialism in Asia. It is good to see that the Americans are about as baffled as when they started. 'When the Buddhist storm broke in Saigon in 1963, the American embassy had only a sketchy CIA paper on Buddhism in Vietnam in its files. Embassy political officers and CIA agents rushed out to find out who the Buddhists were and what they were up to.' Mr Schecter's book is good evidence over 300 pages and not simply two columns of *Time* magazine that the Americans are still floundering in their seemingly bottomless pit of ignorance. J. H.

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n Halliday

Italy and 'Structural Reforms'

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ERRATA

Footnote 11, page 13: H.B. Acton is editor, not of *Mind*, but of *Philosophy*.
In the table on page 17, for *Nationality* read *Country of Origin*.

This fiftieth issue of New Left Review opens with a critique, by Perry Anderson, of the structures of bourgeois culture in Britain. The task of forging a revolutionary and internationalist political culture in this country has always been a central preoccupation of the Review. This involves attacking the ideas which help the ruling class to maintain its hegemony as well as a willingness to learn from advances in revolutionary theory and practice abroad. If the present stirrings of a revolutionary consciousness are not to relapse into new versions of reformism, the Left must prove itself capable of fighting the enemy both on the ideological front and in mass struggle.

The student movement obviously has special responsibilities here. The emergence of a revolutionary student movement in the advanced capitalist countries has upset many traditional schemas of revolution. It should now be evident to all that students are a potentially insurgent force and that they can play a key role in a general revolutionary alliance. By their struggles, students can undermine an important bastion of ruling class power (higher education) and help to detonate wider social conflicts. In this issue we publish reports on the experience of the student movement in three British universities. As with any genuine movement, the experience of mass action has many lessons, which need to be compared and generalized.

The Italian Left has been an internationally quoted source for both theory and practice. There are two reasons why this is a suitable moment for a general summing-up of the Italian experience. First, the French events have thrown into question all the assumptions of institutional left-wing politics in the advanced capitalist countries. Second, the generation of anti-Fascist Resistance leaders will soon have left the political stage. They have been the mainstay of an ideological outlook which was grounded in a historical experience increasingly remote from the younger generations;

the latter have been confronted with the class problems of straightforward modern capitalist oppression. Jon Halliday's article analyses recent Italian politics in this light.

The debate on Trotsky (NLR 44, 47 and 48) is developed in this issue of the Review by a Communist historian, Monty Johnstone. This is a debate which has stimulated considerable discussion, and has already been widely translated—from Cuba to Japan. Also we continue the series of first-hand reports on the Cultural Revolution from John Collier, who is a teacher at the University of Canton.

Finally, a word of thanks to all those readers who have sent in messages of support and good will as we reach this enlarged special fiftieth number.

Components of the National Culture

A coherent and militant student movement has not yet emerged in England. But it may now be only a matter of time before it does. Britain is the last major industrialized country which has not produced one. The immediate priorities for any such movement are obvious: the fight against the authoritarianism of universities and colleges, alliance with the working-class and struggle against imperialism. These are the issues which are the natural focus of struggle for a mass student revolt. There is, however, another front which will have eventually to be opened. This is a direct attack on the reactionary and mystifying culture inculcated in universities and colleges, and which it is one of the fundamental purposes of British higher education to instil in students.

Louis Althusser has recently written that within the general system of higher education 'the number one strategic point of the action of the

dominant class' is 'the very *knowledge* students receive from their teachers'. This is 'the true fortress of class influence in the university'; 'it is by the very nature of the knowledge it imparts to students that the bourgeoisie exerts its greatest control over them.'¹ An assault on this 'fortress' is, in fact, a necessary condition of the successful take-off of a student movement (the example of the German SDS is eloquent here). For one of the main reasons for the lateness of any student unrest in England is precisely the lack of any revolutionary tradition within English culture. Only where revolutionary ideas are freely and widely available—forming part of their daily environment—will large numbers of students begin to revolt. Hitherto, they have been muzzled and quiescent, not primarily because of their class origins (which are somewhat more democratic than in many countries with violent upheavals), but more importantly because of their cultural formation. It is not their social recruitment which distinguishes British students from German, Italian or French students—but their intellectual heritage. To unlock their traditional and uncritical attitudes towards university and society, a systematic critique of established British culture is needed. This must not become a substitute for practical struggle against institutions of higher education and the society of which they are a part: it should accompany it. Where is such a systematic critique to be found? The natural source for it is the political Left. Unfortunately, any nascent student movement will not find much immediate assistance there.

Britain, the most conservative major society in Europe, has a culture in its own image: mediocre and inert. The ataraxy of this culture is manifest in any international context. But it is a culture of which the Left in Britain has largely been a passive spectator, and at times a deluded accomplice. Twentieth century British culture was by and large made against it. Yet the Left has never truly questioned this 'national' inheritance which is one of the most enduring bonds of its subordination.² But this duty remains on the agenda of any serious socialist movement in Britain, that may emerge from the debris of the past. Without revolutionary theory, wrote Lenin, there can be no revolutionary movement. Gramsci, in effect, added: without a revolutionary culture, there will be no revolutionary theory. A political science capable of guiding the working-class movement to final victory will only be born within a general intellectual matrix which challenges bourgeois ideology in every sector of thought and represents a decisive, hegemonic alternative to the cultural status quo. It is enough to say this, to be reminded that in Britain, at present, there is virtually no organized combat of any kind, anywhere along the front. Worse than this, we do not have even an elementary cartography of the terrain that must be

¹ 'Problèmes Etudiants', *La Nouvelle Critique* 152, January 1964, pp. 88–89.

² In recent years a number of radical critiques of different intellectual disciplines have appeared, one after the other: Gellner's *Words and Things*, Carr's *What is History* Robinson's *Economic Philosophy* and Leach's *Rethinking Anthropology*. All of these express an awareness of stagnation, and make effective criticisms of existing orthodoxy. But they are all—strikingly—written from the standpoint of a consequent liberalism; they were not produced by the Left. The result is that they have never aggregated into a cumulative attack on contemporary British culture, and hence have never had their proper impact: discrete criticisms may be ignored or absorbed.

disputed. The most influential socialist work of the past decade was called *Culture and Society*. Yet the British Left has few analyses of its own society: it has none of its culture.

The aim of the present essay is to begin a preliminary inventory of the problems involved in considering the total 'set' of contemporary British culture, and its meaning for socialists. Given the complete mutism of the past, any such initial attempt will inevitably suffer from errors, lapses, elisions and omissions. But discussion of the subject is eventually a precondition of political advance by students, and intellectual advance by the Left, and a start must be made somewhere. The risks of haste are obvious; but the fact is that we are suffering from the results of years of delay.

1. Culture

British culture as it exists today is a profound obstacle to revolutionary politics. What is meant by culture here? A preliminary delimitation is essential. We are not concerned with the anthropological conception of culture, as the sum of social customs and symbols in a given society. The generalization of this use of the term characterized the Left in the fifties, and was responsible for some important insights into British society: this was the moment of Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*. But this usage also blurred the specificity of the superstructural complex which is a society's original thought and art.

For the purpose of this essay, it should merely be stated at the outset that the concept of culture employed here will be distinct from the usage popularized then. This does not mean that the focus will simply be on the superstructural complex evoked above—the original thought and art of a society. Two large exclusions will be made within this ensemble, leaving the core-phenomenon with which the analysis will be concerned. These two exclusions are the natural sciences at one extreme and creative art at the other. The reasons for this restriction follow from the political point of departure of the enterprise. In effect, the culture that is immediately central and internal to any politics, is that which provides our fundamental concepts of man and society. These are, by definition, essential axes of all social action. Thus the disciplines which are obviously relevant and amenable to a political and structural analysis are history, sociology, anthropology, economics, political theory, philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism, psychology and psychoanalysis. The natural sciences and creative art are, of course, also intimately linked to the institutional order of society, and the class relations which underpin it. But the articulations are qualitatively different. The problem is a vast one in its own right, which cannot be discussed here. It may suffice to say, very approximately, that the dose of 'objectivity' in the natural sciences and 'subjectivity' in art is symmetrically greater than either in the social sciences delimited above, and they therefore have correspondingly more mediated relationships to the social structure. They do not, in other words, directly provide our basic concepts of man and society—the natural sciences because they forge concepts for the understanding of nature, not *society*, and art because it deals with man and society, but does not provide us with

their *concepts*. The autonomy of the three spheres, and the 'central' intercalation of the first, is evident in the history of socialism itself in the twentieth century. Russia in the thirties, during the most sombre years of Stalin's rule, witnessed the atomic physics of Kapitzka and the lyrical poetry of Pasternak. But it was relatively devoid of advance in the main social or human sciences. The triple combination was no accident. The strategic band of culture for twentieth century politics—central redoubt of the 'class fortress'—is the segment that lies between creative art and physical science. For procedural convenience, and the sake of compression, this will be the scope of the culture discussed here.

2. Structure

Given this delimitation, there is one traditional socialist approach to the subject. This is the specific denunciation of manifest bourgeois distortions in the *content* of each different discipline. This is a crucial day-to-day task. But it does not constitute a genuinely revolutionary critique of these disciplines if it accepts their present distribution and demarcation; it then renounces any purchase on them as a coherent totality. In other words, it does not achieve a *structural* analysis of them. What is meant by structure here? A recent definition by Levi-Strauss is pertinent. He writes that a structural method in the study of social facts is characterized by its examination, 'not of the terms (in a system), but of *the relationships between the terms*.'³ The structure of British culture is thus essentially to be located in the inter-relationship between the disciplines which compose it, and not within each discipline. It is not the content of the individual sectors that determines the essential character of each so much as the ground-plan of their distribution. Of course, the former will inevitably relay the latter in its own space. The cartography of the system as a whole should then indicate its inner articulation.

This regulative principle will dictate the forms taken by the analysis which ensues. It is evident that an exhaustive, immanent account of each sector—given the span of disciplines—is impossible for any one critic. The illusion that this would be necessary is doubtless partly responsible for the silence of the Left on the topic. In fact, no such universal competence is required, once the aim is, not to assess the corpus, but to capture the structure of British culture. This itself demands, of course, some consideration of the character of each sector within it—enough, precisely, to establish its specific articulation with the others into a system. No attempt will be made to give a comprehensive account of any one discipline. The analysis will focus on the general layout of system, and then try to indicate the approximate nature of each segment within it. It will thus be deliberately incomplete and open.

3. The Absent Centre

Confronted with the wide ambit of intellectual phenomena comprised by British culture, where should a structural analysis begin? Th-

³ *La Nouvelle Observateur* 115, January 25-31, 1967.

starting-point here will be any observed irregularities in the contours of British culture, viewed internationally. That is, any basic phenomena which are not a matter of course, but contradict elementary expectation from comparative experience and hence seem to demand a special explanation. Such irregularities may provide a privileged point of entry into the culture as a whole, and thereby furnish a key to the system.

If we survey the list of disciplines set out above, and consider them in an international perspective, is there any obvious anomaly among them? History, economics, anthropology, philosophy, aesthetics, political theory, psychology, or literary criticism—all these present nothing abnormal in Britain, by comparative standards. All are represented by departments in universities, which teach courses legitimated by decades of tradition. The local pedigree of each is respectable; the leading practitioners enjoy a certain external reputation, if only (frequently) in the English-speaking world. There is, however, one patent exception in this roll-call: sociology. A trivial, if significant index of a radical disjuncture between it and the other 'terms' of the system is the lack of any chair in sociology at Oxford or Cambridge, the traditional apex of prestige within British university life, and the lack of any course at either (both have part-time papers). The case is unique among the world's major universities. This institutional aspect, however, is merely a remote, mediate consequence of an original and fundamental historical fact.

Britain—alone of major Western societies—never produced a classical sociology. Events that fail to happen are often more important than those which do; but they are always infinitely more difficult to see. Nothing is so familiar as the absence of an English Durkheim, Pareto or Weber: and nothing is so unnoticeable. Yet the non-emergence of any classical sociology in England, and its consequence, the withered half-life of the subject to this day, are momentous historical events. For sociology was the great intellectual achievement of the European bourgeoisie at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It was the birth of a new mode of social thought that—significantly—occurred virtually simultaneously in Germany with Weber, France with Durkheim and Italy with Pareto. These three thinkers founded a tradition that was later dynamically recapitulated by Parsons in *The Structure of Social Action*. It is important to insist on this, for Parsons is the heir of the great European lineage; his work shows that sociology was in no fashion destined to be a merely 'continental' phenomenon, after its origins. Yet Britain not merely failed to participate in the great collective discovery of the new social science that occurred in Europe before the First World War.⁴ It also failed in any way to assimilate the massive Anglo-Saxon development of that discovery, which emerged in the USA from the thirties onwards. British university culture has, of course, remained virtually impervious to Parsonian theory to this day.

⁴Parsons explains very clearly why Spencer may not be regarded as a classical sociological thinker. Indeed, his book opens with the words: 'Who now reads Spencer?'. His laconic answer: 'Spencer is dead'. He who worshipped at the shrine of evolution was its victim, when scientific theory evolved elsewhere. *The Structure of Social Action*, p. 3.

Britain thus completely missed both major moments in the development of the new science. From first to last, no sociologist of any original calibre was thrown up on these shores. The lack of any great theorist of the order of Weber, Durkheim or Pareto is significant enough. That it was no accident is confirmed by a glance at the secondary figures who contributed to what the standard volume on it calls 'The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930': Stuart Hughes's popular almanac, *Consciousness and Society*, lists some twenty lesser thinkers who represent parallel currents of thought: not one is English. This huge gap has never been filled. To this day, despite the recent belated growth of sociology as a formal discipline in England, the record of listless mediocrity and wizened provincialism is unrelieved. The subject is still largely a poor cousin of 'social work' and 'social administration', the dispirited descendants of Victorian charity.

What is the meaning of this spectacular fault in the English intellectual landscape? Is it an isolated fissure, or does it have wider implications? Classical European sociology was a *synthetic* social science. This is its crucial, innovating importance. Weber's sociology of religion, law and the market, Durkheim's study of suicide and social solidarity, and Pareto's theory of elites, surpassed discrete 'economics', 'psychology' and 'history' by unifying them in a theory of society as a totality. The most distinguished English social thinker of this generation was Alfred Marshall, father of marginalist economics. As Parsons points out, Marshall's eventual impasse may be seen precisely as a failure to develop the categories necessary to transcend analytic economics (Marshall's problem of 'activities' beyond rational economic egoism). It was Pareto and Weber who solved his problem by resituating it within a wider theoretical ensemble. Sociology, in this sense, came into existence as a science which aspired to a global reconstruction of social formations.⁵ This was its *differentia specifica*. It is no accident that it later developed into the monumental architectonic of Parsonian action theory, embracing every dimension of social existence in a single schedule of classificatory concepts. Whatever the concrete outcome of this enterprise, the ambition to provide such a master synthesis was inscribed in its vocation from the start.

Sociology, however, was itself largely (not exclusively) a response to a previous totalizing system. It notoriously emerged as a bourgeois counter-reaction to Marxism on the continent. All of Weber's work on economy and society forms an immense, oblique contestation of the Marxism which had conquered the working-class movement in imperial Germany; his political hostility to that movement was undying. Pareto sought to combat the primitive 'mob-rule' of socialism by writing a violent attack on Marx; Durkheim sought to domesticate it within the reformist perspectives of French positivism. A profound fear of the masses and premonition of social disintegration haunts the work of all three.

⁵ The essential texts for this history are Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action* and his important recent essay 'Unity and Diversity in the Modern Intellectual Disciplines: The Role of the Social Sciences', in *Sociological Theory and Modern Society*, New York 1967.

Marxism had preceded classical sociology by fifty years. It was an infinitely more powerful synthesis of discrete disciplines, founded on a scale which no bourgeois social science was ever later able to imitate or repeat. Marx's thought was—to use Lenin's traditional formulation—the summation of German philosophy, French politics and English economics. The demarche of classical sociology was thus anticipated and surpassed, on a much vaster terrain. Marx's itinerary was a spiral critique and reintegration of successive cultural systems of his time. He began by an immanent critique of Hegel's philosophy, showing its inability to elucidate the political order of civil society and the State. He then undermined Proudhon's politics by showing its inability to comprehend the economic structure of bourgeois society. He then overthrew Ricardo's economics by showing its inability to grasp the core element of capitalism, as a historical mode of production. The final fusion of these successive critiques in the mature Marx produced a theory that was totally revolutionary, in both scope and objective. Marx's concept of totality is quite distinct from that of Weber or Durkheim, however. Marx's great innovation was the idea of a complex totality, *loaded* by the predominance in the last instance of one level within it—the economy, such that genuine, dynamic contradictions were generated by the discrepant hierarchy of its levels. This was a complete rupture with the Hegelian idea of totality, to which Weber, inspired by German idealism, later returned. Weber's social whole is a circular one, in which all the elements are equivalent and enjoy casual parity: religious ethics and economic practice indifferently determine each other. This conception was later to produce the explicit theories of functionalism. A second contrast is equally crucial. Marx's thought was not only defined by a specific concept of the *totality*. It was also characterized by the complementary centrality of his concept of *contradiction*. Althusser has recently shown the interdependence of the two.⁶ It is no accident that in its crepuscular version of Marxism, classical sociology too was characterized by a pervasive awareness of contradiction. Once again, the notion underwent a critical dilution. Weber's work revolves endlessly about the twin problems of 'charisma' and 'bureaucracy', and the interversions of one into the other. Despite the surreptitious evolutionism which underlies all he wrote (rationalization as the destiny of the West), the inherent instability of either a bureaucratic or a charismatic political order and the tendency of each to capsize into the other, was a constant for him to the end. Pareto's theory of power posited a continual overthrow of elites, from 'lions' to 'foxes' and back again, in an interminable circular movement. Durkheim's account of the development from mechanical to organic solidarity (primitive to industrial societies) produced the concept of anomie—the unceasing reproduction of subjective rulelessness by a society that is defined by its ensemble of objective rules. In every case, a notion of contradiction is at the very core of the work. But it is always a 'degraded' contradiction, that is *cyclical* in its movement and thereby immobile and eternal. This cyclical contradiction is a logical by-product of the idealist totality. It is not an essential one. Its presence in classical sociology betrays the disquiet of its founders, and the impending disaster of the

⁶ 'Contradiction and Overdetermination', *New Left Review* 41. Allen Lane Press will shortly be publishing a translation of Althusser's collection of essays, *For Marx*.

Great War. Parsons was later to develop an absolutely integrated totality, in which contradictions as such have disappeared: there is only 'tension-control' and 'pattern-maintenance'. This is the main difference between action theory and classical sociology; it indicates all the distance between the forebodings of a declining European civilization on the eve of an international civil war, and the optimism of American capitalism in the epoch of its world supremacy. In either case, the Marxist concept of contradiction, as the disjuncture within a complex totality which produces a singular configuration itself striated with new contradictions, is absent.

Marx's thought was so far in advance of its time and its society that it was unassimilable in the nineteenth century. For fifty years, it was never seriously confronted within European bourgeois thought. It was only when the political rise of the working-class movement became a grave and immediate threat to the social order, that bourgeois culture was finally forced to react to the challenge. There were various sectoral attacks and refutations of Marx by marginalist economists like Böhm-Bawerk. But the main creative response was the emergence of a new social science—classical sociology. This did not normally engage in any direct confrontation with the ascendant light of Marxism. It was its silent shadow, in the darkening world of the European bourgeoisie on the eve of the First World War.

Marxism in the twentieth century, after the inevitable delay in its theoretical assimilation within the working-class movement which had been politically won to it, generated a new wave of major theory. Lenin, Lukács and Gramsci were the great, dominating figures of this epoch. Flourishing Marxist cultures rose in Germany, Italy and France, not to speak of Russia. In every important continental country, the impact of Marxism was deep and lasting; it left an indelible imprint on the national culture, despite every political vicissitude and theoretical assault. Today, the serious social science of these countries has developed either within, or in tension with, the heritage of Marx.

Britain is solitarily exempt from this tension. It produced no important Marxist thinker. Marxism, in fact, was virtually unknown until the thirties of this century. It then suddenly gripped a new generation of intellectuals, overwhelmed by the experience of the depression and the rise of fascism. It is difficult in retrospect to make any fair judgment of the thirties. No decade has been so obscured by myth and cliché for later generations: its memory has been formed by its enemies and renegades. A great deal of historical excavation is needed to re-establish the truth of those years. What is clear is that a spontaneous radicalization of the traditionally dormant English intelligentsia occurred, spurred by the political gravity of the time. It was cut short after a few years, by the German-Soviet Pact and the Second World War.⁷ The

⁷ There are only two moments in English cultural history when a collective defection threatened to create a dissident intelligentsia. Both were snapped off before they had time to develop. The precursor of the thirties was the nineties of the last century, when Bohemianism as a social phenomenon finally emerged in England—sixty years after its advent, celebrated by Balzac, in Paris. Art Nouveau and the aesthetic socialism of Wilde were its products. Events were as ruthless with this revolt as with its

vast majority of those intellectuals who had briefly been on the Left, swung to the Right, and the traditional order of English intellectual life was restored. The collective fever had been ephemeral. It was the passing product of a political conjuncture, and developed no serious intellectual dimension to it at the time. Marx's own work, and the development of his theory after his death, remained virtually unstudied. Contrary as it was to all established and traditional modes of thought in English culture, its genuine assimilation would have needed an immense work of theoretical study and reconversion. Nothing, however, was less imagined by many of the radicals of the time. This was partly due to the urgent political preoccupations of the decade. But there was a cultural reason at work: their inherited liberalism often subsisted quite unaltered, beneath their new political allegiance. This persistence was facilitated by their predominant occupations. By and large, the radicals of the thirties were not historians, sociologists or philosophers. By contrast, there was a plethora of poets and natural scientists—the two vocations most unsuited to effect any lasting political transformation of British culture. Where there was abid to 'apply' their formal beliefs, the outcome was frequently bad art and false science: at its worst, the rhymes of Spender and the fantasies of Bernal.⁸ For the most part, however, the leftism of these intellectuals was merely a set of external political attitudes. It was inevitable that anything so provincial and insubstantial would be blown away by the first gust of the international gale. A few years later, most of the rebellious litterateurs were banal functionaries of reaction. This general history does not cancel the courage and fidelity of the individual exceptions who never abandoned the beliefs of their youth: William Empson, Claud Cockburn, Roy Fuller and others.⁹

For the tragedy of the decade of the thirties was that it paradoxically vaccinated British culture against Marxism. The resistances built up have survived virtually intact to this day. The fifties and sixties saw the proliferation of Marxism on the continent; Althusser in France, Adorno in Germany and Della Volpe in Italy all founded important and divergent schools. England remained unaffected. Marxist theory had never become naturalized.

Britain, then, may be defined as the European country which—uniquely—never produced either a classical sociology or a national Marxism.

successor. There was one hammer-blow after another: 1895, Wilde's trial; 1898, Beardale's death; June 1899, MacKintosh's Exhibition; October 1899, Boer War. The torrent of conformity and chauvinism after Mafeking finally submerged the memory of the nineties, just as the Molotov-Rubbentrop Pact eclipsed the thirties.

⁸ For examples, *Communism and British Intellectuals*, Neal Wood, London 1959 pp. 108-113 and 138-144. The only existent essay which does justice to the politico-intellectual context of the decade is Alexander Cockburn's 'To and from the Frontier', *The Review* 16.

⁹ The very end of the decade germinated a group of historians, of which the most prominent at the time was Christopher Hill, who thirty years later were to produce what the thirties so completely lacked—a serious, scientific intellectual achievement. Condemnations of the Left in the thirties today tend to forget this. The complexity of the period is much greater than the standard accounts allow. A symbol. When all was lost, by 1940, two undergraduates at Cambridge were collaborating on a pamphlet defending the Russian invasion of Finland: Eric Hobsbawm and Raymond Williams.

British culture was consequently characterized by an absent centre. Both classical sociology and Marxism were global theories of society, articulated in a totalizing conceptual system. They subsumed traditional disciplines within a synthesis designed to capture the 'structure of structures'—the social totality as such. Britain has for more than fifty years lacked any form whatever of such thought. The whole configuration of its culture has been determined—and dislocated—by this void at its centre. Before examining the multiple, interlocking consequences of this phenomenon, however, it must be asked; what were its proximate causes?

4. The Sociology of No Sociology

Mannheim proposed a sociology of knowledge; what is needed here is a sociology of ignorance. Why did Britain never produce *either* a Weber, a Durkheim, a Pareto *or* a Lenin, a Lukács, a Gramsci? The peculiar destiny of the nineteenth century industrial bourgeoisie in Britain is the secret of this twin default. The class which accomplished the titanic technological explosion of the Industrial Revolution never achieved a political or social revolution in England. It was checked by a prior capitalist class, the agrarian aristocracy which had matured in the eighteenth century, and controlled a State formed in its image. There was no insuperable contradiction between the modes of production of the two classes. The industrial bourgeoisie, traumatized by the French Revolution and fearful of the nascent working-class movement, never took the risk of a confrontation with the dominant aristocracy. It never evicted the latter from its hegemonic control of the political order, and eventually fused with it in a new, composite ruling bloc in mid-century. It thus remained socially and politically heteronomous, even in the years of its economic apotheosis. The result was that it never generated a revolutionary ideology, like that of the Enlightenment. Its thinkers were confined by the cramped horizons of their class. They developed powerful sectoral disciplines—notably the economics of Ricardo and Malthus. They advanced the natural sciences—above all evolutionist biology with Darwin. But they failed to create any general theory of society, or any philosophical synthesis of compelling dimensions. The one *sui generis* creed of this class produced by its intellectuals, utilitarianism, was a crippled caricature of such an ideology, with no chance whatever of becoming the official justification of the Victorian social system. The hegemonic ideology of this society was a much more aristocratic combination of 'traditionalism' and 'empiricism', intensely hierarchical in its emphasis, which accurately reiterated the history of the dominant agrarian class. The British bourgeoisie by and large assented to this archaic legitimization of the status quo, and sedulously mimicked it. After its own amalgamation with the aristocracy in the later nineteenth century, it became second nature to the collective propertied class.¹⁰

¹⁰ For a much lengthier discussions of this history, see Tom Naim 'The British Political Elite', *New Left Review* 23 and Perry Anderson 'Origins of the Present Crisis', *New Left Review* 23 and 'Socialism and Pseudo-Empiricism' *New Left Review* 35.

What was the net result of this history? The British bourgeoisie from the outset renounced its intellectual birthright. It refused ever to put society as a whole in question. A deep, instinctive aversion to the very category of the totality marks its entire trajectory.¹¹ It never had to recast society as a whole, in a concrete historical practice. It consequently never had to rethink society as a whole, in abstract theoretical reflection. Empirical, piece-meal intellectual disciplines corresponded to humble, circumscribed social action. Nature could be approached with audacity and speculation: society was treated as if it were an immutable second nature. The category of the totality was renounced by the British bourgeoisie in its acceptance of a comfortable, but secondary station within the hierarchy of early Victorian capitalism.¹² In this first moment of its history, it did not need it. Because the economic order of agrarian England was already capitalist and the feudal State had been dismantled in the seventeenth century, there was no vital, indefeasible necessity for it to overthrow the previous ruling class. A common mode of production united both, and made their eventual fusion possible. The cultural limitations of bourgeois reason in England were thus politically rational: the *ultima ratio* of the economy founded both.

Superfluous when the bourgeoisie was fighting for integration into the ruling order, the notion of the totality became perilous when it achieved it. Forgotten one moment, it was repressed the next. For once the new hegemonic class had coalesced, it was naturally and resolutely hostile to any form of thought that took the whole social system as its object, and hence necessarily put it in question. Henceforward, its culture was systematically organized *against* any such potential subversion. There were social critics of Victorian capitalism, of course: the distinguished line of thinkers studied by Williams in *Culture and Society*. But this was a literary tradition incapable of generating a conceptual system. The intellectual universe of Weber, Durkheim or Pareto was foreign to the pattern of British culture which had congealed over the century. One decisive reason for this was, of course, that the political threat which had so largely influenced the birth of sociology on the continent—the rise of socialism—did not materialize in England. The British working-class failed to create its own political party throughout the nineteenth century. When it eventually did so, it was twenty years behind its

¹¹ A century later, H. B. Acton—official philosopher and editor of *Mind*—celebrated its instinct with these revealing words: 'It is not without interest, perhaps, in this connection to mention that in 1857, two years before Marx published his *Critique of Political Economy*, a body was founded known as the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. . . . The sort of topics discussed in each section may be seen from the following examples, one from each section, taken from the first Volume of the Transactions: Judicial Statistics; An Inquiry on Early Withdrawal from School in Swansea and its Neighbourhood; Crime and Density of Population; Houses for Working Men—their Arrangement, Drainage and Ventilation; the Early Closing Movement. . . . The notions employed are seldom so general as 'society', 'capitalism', 'revolution', etc but are rather of the relative particularity of 'convictions', 'sentences', 'bankruptcies', 'adulteration of food', 'drainage and 'penny banks'. . . . This would seem to be the sort of approach to social science that is most likely to ensure that its exponents know what they are talking about.' *The Illusion of an Epoch*, London 1962, pp. 185–186.

¹² For the purposes of definition: a totality is an entity whose diverse structures are bound together in such a way that any one of them considered separately is an abstraction. It is not an aggregated sum of parts.

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continental opposites, and was still quite untouched by Marxism. The dominant class in Britain was thus never forced to produce a counter-totalizing thought by the danger of revolutionary socialism. Both the global ambitions, and the secret pessimism, of Weber or Pareto were alien to it. Its peculiar, indurated parochialism was proof against any foreign influences or importations. The curious episode of a belated English 'Hegelianism', in the work of Green, Bosanquet and Bradley, provides piquant evidence of this. Hegel's successors in Germany had rapidly used his philosophical categories to dispatch theology. They had then plunged into the development of the explosive political and economic implications of his thought. The end of this road was, of course, Marx himself. Sixty years after Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, however, Green and Bradley innocently adopted an aqueous Hegel, in their quest for philosophical assistance to shore up the traditional Christian piety of the Victorian middle-class, now threatened by the growth of the natural sciences.¹³ This anachronism was naturally short-lived. It merely indicated the retarded preoccupations of its milieu: a recurring phenomenon. Two decades earlier, George Eliot had solved her spiritual doubts by borrowing Comte's 'religion of humanity'—not his social mathematics. These importations were ephemeral, because the problems they were designed to solve were artificial. They simply acted as a soothing emulsion in the transition towards a secular bourgeois culture.

In a panorama emptied of profound intellectual upheaval or incendiary social conflict, British culture tranquilly cultivated its own private concerns, at the end of the long epoch of Victorian imperialism. In 1900, the harmony between the hegemonic class and its intellectuals was virtually complete. Noel Annan has drawn the unforgettable portrait of the British intellectuals of this time. 'Here is an aristocracy, secure, established and, like the rest of English society, accustomed to responsible and judicious utterance and sceptical of iconoclastic speculation'.¹⁴ There was no separate intelligentsia.¹⁵ An intricate web

¹³ *The Politics of Conscience*, Melvin Richter, London 1964, p. 36 and passim.

¹⁴ 'The Intellectual Aristocracy', in *Studies in Social History, A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan*, ed. J. H. Plumb, London, 1955, p. 285.

¹⁵ The historical reasons for this peculiar phenomenon are complex and over-determined. I have discussed them elsewhere, in *Origins of the Present Crisis*. Two early determinants may be mentioned here. Hexter's famous essay 'The Education of the Aristocracy in the Renaissance' (*Reappraisals in History*, London 1961) shows how the aristocracy captured public schools and universities in the sixteenth century, preventing the development of a separate clergy within them. Equally important was the absence of Roman Law in England, which blocked the growth of an intelligentsia based on legal faculties of the universities in the mediaeval period. On the Continent, the law schools of such centres as Bologna and Paris, which taught the abstract principles of jurisprudence, made an important contribution to the emergence of a separate intellectual group; whereas in England legal training was controlled by the guild of practising lawyers and was based on the accumulation of precedent. Weber's discussion of this contrast is excellent. He writes of the concepts of English law: 'They are not "general concepts" which would be formed by abstraction from concreteness or by logical interpretation of meaning or by generalization and subsumption; nor were these concepts apt to be used in syllogistically applicable norms. In the purely empirical conduct of (English) legal practice and legal training one always moves from the particular to the particular but never tries to move from the particular to general propositions in order to be able subsequently to deduce from them the norms for new particular cases. . . . No rational legal training or theory can ever

of kinship linked the traditional lineages which produced scholars and thinkers to each other and to their common social group. The same names occur again and again: Macaulay, Trevelyan, Arnold, Vaughan, Strachey, Darwin, Huxley, Stephens, Wedgwood, Hodgkin and others. Intellectuals were related by family to their class, not by profession to their estate. 'The influence of these families', Annan comments, after tracing out their criss-crossing patterns, 'may partly explain a paradox which has puzzled European and American observers of English life: the paradox of an intelligentsia which appears to conform rather than rebel against the rest of society.'¹⁶ Many of the intellectuals he discusses were based on Cambridge, then dominated by the grey and ponderous figure of Henry Sidgwick (brother-in-law, needless to say, of Prime Minister Balfour). The ideological climate of this world has been vividly recalled by a latter-day admirer. Harrod's biography of Keynes opens with this memorable evocation: 'If Cambridge combined a deep-rooted traditionalism with a lively progressiveness, so too did England. She was in the strongly upward trend of her material development; her overseas trade and investment were still expanding; the great pioneers of social reform were already making headway in educating public opinion. On the basis of her hardly won, but now solidly established, prosperity, the position of the British Empire seemed unshakable. Reforms would be within a framework of stable and unquestioned social values. There was ample elbow-room for experiment without danger that the main fabric of our economic well-being would be destroyed. It is true that only a minority enjoyed the full fruits of this well-being; but the consciences of the leaders of thought were not unmindful of the hardships of the poor. There was great confidence that, in due course, by careful management, their condition would be improved out of recognition. The stream of progress would not cease to flow. While the reformers were most earnestly bent on their purposes, they held that there were certain strict rules and conventions which must not be violated; secure and stable though the position seemed, there was a strong sense that danger beset any changes.'¹⁷ Such was the solid, normal world of the English intelligentsia before 1914.

5. The White Emigration

Occupation, civil war and revolution were the continuous experience of continental Europe for the next three decades. Hammered down from without or blown from within, not a single major social and political structure survived intact. Only two countries on the whole land-mass were left untouched, the small states of Sweden and Switzerland. Elsewhere, violent change swept every society in Europe, from Oporto to Kazan and Turku to Noto. The disintegration of the Romanov, Hohenzollern and Habsburg Empires, the rise of Fascism, the Second World War, and victory of Communism in Eastern Europe,

arise in such a situation.' (*Law in Economy and Society*, Cambridge USA, 1954, p. 202) The ulterior consequences of this system are evident. Ben Brewster has pointed out that the Scottish Enlightenment—so unlike anything south of the border—may by contrast be partly traced to the tradition of Roman Law north of the border. (*Cambridge Forward* 40.)

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *The Life of John Maynard Keynes*, Roy Harrod, London 1951, pp. 2-3.

followed each other uninterruptedly. There was revolution in Russia, counter-revolution in Germany, Austria and Italy, occupation in France and civil war in Spain. The smaller countries underwent parallel upheavals.

England, meanwhile, suffered neither invasion nor revolution. No fundamental institutional change supervened from the turn of the century to the era of the Cold War. Geographical isolation and historical petrification appeared to render English society immutable. Despite two wars, its stability and security were never seriously ruffled. This history is so natural to most Englishmen, that they have never registered how supernatural it has seemed abroad. The cultural consequences have, partly as a result, never been systematically considered. But this is the context which has vitally determined the evolution of much of English thought since the Great War.

If one surveys the landscape of British culture at mid-century, what is the most prominent change that had taken place since 1900? It is so obvious, in effect, that virtually no-one has noticed it. The phalanx of national intellectuals portrayed by Annan has been eclipsed. In this intensely provincial society, foreigners suddenly become omnipresent. The crucial, formative influences in the arc of culture with which we are concerned here are again and again emigres. Their quality and originality vary greatly, but their collective role is indisputable. The following list of *maitres d'école* gives some idea of the extent of the phenomenon:

| | <i>Disciplines</i> | <i>Country of Origin</i> |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Ludwig Wittgenstein | Philosophy | Austria |
| Bronislaw Malinowski | Anthropology | Poland |
| Lewis Namier | History | Poland |
| Karl Popper | Social Theory | Austria |
| Isaiah Berlin | Political Theory | Russia |
| Ernst Gombrich | Aesthetics | Austria |
| Hans-Jurgen Eysenck | Psychology | Germany |
| Melanie Klein | Psychoanalysis | Austria |
| (Isaac Deutscher | Marxism | Poland) |

The two major disciplines excluded here are economics and literary criticism. Keynes, of course, completely commanded the former; Leavis the latter. But literary criticism—for evident reasons—has been the only sector unaffected by the phenomenon. For at the succeeding level, the presence of expatriates is marked in economics too: perhaps the most influential theorist in England today is Nicholas Kaldor (Hungary), and undoubtedly the most original is Piero Sraffa (Italy). There is no need to recall the number of other expatriates elsewhere—Gellner, Elton, Balogh, Von Hayek, Plamenatz, Lichtheim, Steiner, Wind, Wittkower and others.

The contrast with the 'intellectual aristocracy' of 1900 is overwhelming. But what is its meaning? What is the sociological nature of this emigration? Britain is not traditionally an immigrants' country, like the USA. Nor was it ever host, in the nineteenth century, to European

intellectuals rising to occupy eminent positions in its culture. Refugees were firmly suppressed below the threshold of national intellectual life. The fate of Marx is eloquent. The very different reception of these expatriates in the twentieth century was a consequence of the nature of the emigration itself—and of the condition of the national intelligentsia.

The wave of emigrants who came to England in this century were by and large fleeing the permanent instability of their own societies—that is, their proneness to violent, fundamental change.¹⁸ England epitomized the opposite of all this: tradition, continuity and orderly empire. Its culture was consonant with its special history. A process of natural selection occurred, in which those intellectuals with an elective affinity to English modes of thought and political outlook gravitated here. Those refugees who did not, went elsewhere. It is noticeable that there were many Austrians among those who chose Britain. It is perhaps significant that no important Germans did so, with the brief exception of Mannheim who had little impact. The German emigration, coming from a philosophical culture that was quite distinct from the parish-pump positivism of interbellum Vienna, avoided this island. The Frankfurt School of Marxists, Marcuse, Adorno, Benjamin, Horkheimer, and Fromm went to France and then to the USA. Neumann and Reich (initially to Norway) followed. Lukács went to Russia. Brecht went to Scandinavia and then to America, followed by Mann. This was a 'Red' emigration, utterly unlike that which arrived here. It did not opt for England, because of a basic cultural and political incompatibility.¹⁹

The intellectuals who settled in Britain were thus not just a chance agglomeration. They were essentially a 'White', counter-revolutionary emigration. The individual reasons for the different trajectories to England were inevitably varied. Namier came from the powder-keg of Polish Galicia under the Habsburgs. Malinowski chose England, like his countryman Conrad, partly because of its empire. Berlin was a refugee from the Russian Revolution. Popper and Gombrich were fugitives from the civil war and fascism of post-Habsburg Austria. Wittgenstein's motive in finally settling for England is unknown. Whatever the biographical variants, the general logic of this emigration is clear. England was not an accidental landing-stage on which these intellectuals unwittingly found themselves stranded. It was often a conscious choice—an ideal antipode of everything that they rejected. Namier, who was most lucid about the world from which he had escaped, expressed his hatred of it most deeply. He saw England as a land built on instinct and custom, free from the ruinous contagion of Europe—general ideas. He proclaimed 'the immense superiority which existing social forms have over human movements and genius, and the poise and rest which there are in a spiritual inheritance, far superior to

¹⁸ Some dates: Klein was born 1882 in Vienna. Malinowski 1884 in Cracow. Namier 1888 near Lvov. Wittgenstein 1889 in Vienna. Popper 1902 in Vienna. Deutscher 1907 near Cracow. Berlin 1909 in Riga. Gombrich 1909 in Vienna. Eysenck 1916.

¹⁹ Adorno spent two years in Oxford working on Husserl, unnoticed, before he went to America. A number of the greatest names of modern art spent a similar brief and obscure sojourn here before crossing the Atlantic to a more hospitable environment: Mondrian, Gropius, Moholy-Nagy and others.

the thoughts, will or invention of any single generation'.²⁰ *Rust*—the word conveys the whole underlying trauma of this emigration. The English, Namier thought, were peculiarly blessed because, as a nation 'they perceive and accept facts without anxiously enquiring into their reasons and meaning'.²¹ For 'the less man clogs the free play of his mind with political doctrine and dogma, the better for his thinking'.²² This theme is repeated by thinker after thinker; it is the hall-mark of the white emigration. Namier tried to dismiss general ideas by showing their historical inefficacy; Popper by denouncing their moral iniquity ('holism'); Eysenck by reducing them to psychological velleities; Wittgenstein by undermining their status as intelligible discourse altogether.

Established English culture naturally welcomed these unexpected allies. Every insular reflex and prejudice was powerfully flattered and enlarged in the convex mirror they presented to it. But the extraordinary dominance of the expatriates in these decades is not comprehensible by this alone. It was possible because they *both* reinforced the existing orthodoxy *and* exploited its weakness. For the unmistakable fact is that the traditional, discrete disciplines, having missed either of the great synthetic revolutions in European social thought, were dying of inanition. The English intelligentsia had lost its impetus. Already by the turn of the century, the expatriate supremacy of James and Conrad, Eliot and Pound—three Americans and a Pole—in the two great national literary forms foreshadowed later and more dramatic dispossessions. The last great products of the English intelligentsia matured before the First World War: Russell, Keynes and Lawrence. Their stature is the measure of the subsequent decline. After them, confidence and originality seeped away. There was no more momentum left in the culture; the cumulative absence of any new historical experience in England for so long had deprived it of energy. The conquest of cultural dominance by emigres, in these conditions, becomes explicable. Their qualities were, in fact, enormously uneven. Wittgenstein, Namier and Klein were brilliant originators; Malinowski and Gombrich honourable, but limited pioneers; Popper and Berlin fluent ideologues; Eysenck a popular publicist. The very heterogeneity of these individuals underlines the sociological point: no matter what the quantum of talent, *any* foreign background was an enormous advantage in the British stasis, and might make an intellectual fortune.

The relationship between the expatriates and the secular traditions they encountered was necessarily dialectical. British empiricism and conservatism was on the whole an instinctive, ad hoc affair. It shunned theory even in its rejection of theory. It was a style, not a method. The expatriate impact on this cultural syndrome was paradoxical. In effect, the emigres for the first time systematized the refusal of system. They codified the slovenly empiricism of the past, and thereby hardened and narrowed it. They also, ultimately, rendered it more vulnerable. The transition from Moore to the early Wittgenstein exemplifies this move-

²⁰ *Vanished Supremacies*, London 1962, p. 26.

²¹ *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, London 1961, p. 13.

²² *Personalities and Powers*, London 1955, p. 5.

ment. Wittgenstein's later philosophy reflects an awareness of the antinomy, and an attempt to retreat back to a non-systematized empiricism, a guileless, unaggregated registration of things as they were, in their diversity. On the political plane proper, Popper's shrill advocacy of 'piece-meal social engineering' lent a somewhat mechanistic note to the consecrated processes of British parliamentarism. Apart from this aspect, however, the tremendous injection of life that emigré intelligence and élan gave a fading British culture is evident. The famous *morose* and truculence of Wittgenstein, Namier or Popper, expressed their inner confidence of superiority. Established British culture rewarded them amply, with the appropriate apotheosis: Sir Lewis Namier, Sir Karl Popper, Sir Isaiah Berlin and (perhaps soon) Sir Ernst Gombrich.

This was not just a passive acknowledgment of merit. It was an active social pact. Nothing is more striking than the opposite fate of the one great emigré intellectual whom Britain harboured for thirty years, who was a revolutionary. The *structural* importance of expatriates in English bourgeois thought is confirmed by the symmetrical pre-eminence of a foreigner within its antithesis: Marxism. Both obeyed the *general* determinations of British culture. Isaac Deutscher, the greatest Marxist historian of his time, was the only major contributor to that international system of thought resident in Britain. A much larger figure than his compatriot Namier, Deutscher was reviled and ignored by the academic world throughout his life. He never secured the smallest university post. British culture accepted and promoted what confirmed its fundamental set: it censored and negated anything which departed from it. The White emigration accentuated and crystallized its whole character. But it did not significantly alter it.

6. Configuration of Sectors

What was the intellectual constellation thus produced? Two fundamental anomalies of British culture have been indicated—the central absence of any classical sociology, and the ubiquitous presence of a White emigration. It is now possible to sketch an answer to the question with which this enquiry began. In a cultural system specified by these co-ordinates, what are the relations between the different sectors which compose it? In other words, what is its structure? The ensuing comments are merely a pilot-project. They are designed to show the possibilities of an inter-sectoral analysis, not to constitute a model of one. Thus they will consciously omit and select material, aiming only to discuss the essential for the current purpose. It should be emphasised at the outset that no attempt will be made to give a comprehensive account of any given discipline. A recent essay on English history by Gareth Stedman-Jones furnishes an exemplary analysis of this type.²³ Here, by contrast, the focus will be on the general cultural nexus of which each discipline is a part. To control the span of material, the method adopted will be to discuss only a single, dominant thinker in each sector, and the themes of his work which relate it to the configuration as a whole. Such an approach will provide one, specific illumina-

²³ 'The Pathology of English History', *New Left Review* 46.

tion of the subject; it will not encompass or reveal it at all completely. Collective study and critique on a much wider scale would be necessary for this. Meanwhile, any contribution must of its nature be corrigible and limited.

7. Philosophy

English philosophy since the nineteen-thirties has been dominated by Wittgenstein. In his youth, Wittgenstein was a philosopher who sought a one-to-one fit between a reducible language and a fragmentable reality: basic propositions mirrored atomic facts. This was in essence a monist theory of language, which implicitly excluded 'metaphysical' statements from the realm of the intelligible, because they lacked correspondence with verifiable, molecular entities. After the *Tractatus*, the Vienna Circle proceeded to a much bolder and cruder attack on all forms of discourse which did not conform to the prescriptive model of the physical sciences or mathematics. Any propositions not verifiable by their procedures were written off—not as mistaken, but as meaningless. The distance from Logical Atomism to Logical Positivism was—despite the abandonment of Wittgenstein's notion of granular 'facts'—a short one. The nihilist implications of the latter, however, were too comprehensive to be acceptable to any Western bourgeois society, with its functional need for a consecrated morality and a macro-ideology. This social antinomy reflected an epistemological one. Empiricism pushed to this extreme was subversive of the very experience it should have underwritten: the criterion of verifiability was itself notoriously unverifiable.

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* provided an elegant and delphic solution to these problems. In his later philosophy, Wittgenstein constantly asserted that language was a heteroclitite collection of games with discrete rules governing them. No 'absolute' standpoint outside of them was conceivable. Each game was separate and valid in its own right; the great intellectual error of philosophers was to confuse them, by using a rule for one in the context of another. The meaning of a concept was its conventional use, and the true philosopher was the guardian of conventions. Formally, this doctrine conceded the possibility of 'metaphysics' (ie the traditional concerns of philosophy) as one game among others—if an esoteric one.²⁴ In practice, significantly enough, only religion was ever substantially accorded this status. The main effect of Wittgenstein's later philosophy was simply to consecrate the banalities of everyday language. The anodyne assertion that no external purchase on existing language was possible (attack on ideal languages) was coupled with the implicit assumption that existing language was effectively a complete sum of usages, in which any internal elimination or addition of one game by another was precluded. The

²⁴ Popper had foreseen this possibility already in the early Wittgenstein, and had taken alarm at it: 'Wittgenstein's method leads to a merely verbal solution and must give rise, in spite of its apparent radicalism, not to the destruction or to the exclusion or even to the clear demarcation of metaphysics, but to their intrusion into the field of science, and to their confusion with science.' *The Open Society and Its Enemies* Vol. II, 296-299.

duty of the philosopher, on the contrary, was to ensure the identity and stability of the system, by preventing unorthodox moves within it. This novel notion amounted to a massive, undifferentiated affidavit for the conceptual status quo. Its logical product was a mystique of common sense, and the ordinary language which reflected it. Wittgenstein, a thinker of genuine—if narrow—integrity and originality, despised the ‘impotence and bankruptcy of *Mind*’ and denounced Oxford as a ‘philosophical desert’.²⁵ But Oxford was to be the home of the philosophical school inspired by him.

The linguistic philosophy of the forties and fifties represented a deliberate renunciation of the traditional vocation of philosophy in the West. General ideas about man and society had been the hall-mark of all the great philosophers of the past, no matter of what orientation. Hume no less than Kant, Locke no less than Spinoza, Descartes no less than Leibniz, Mill no less than Hegel, wrote social, ethical and political works as well as epistemological and logical treatises, as part of an integral enterprise. English philosophy after the Second World War systematically rejected the very notion of intellectual innovation. Wittgenstein had written: ‘Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is.’²⁶ The final results of this credo were Austin’s exquisite, obsessional classifications of syntax. His famous address to the Aristotelian Society, *A Plea for Excuses*, presents their justification: ‘Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations; these surely are likely to be more numerous, more sound since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters than any you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon...’²⁷

The social meaning of such a doctrine is obvious enough. Gramsci once wrote that common sense is the practical wisdom of the ruling class. The cult of common sense accurately indicates the role of linguistic philosophy in England. It functions as an anaesthetic ideology, blotting out the very memory of an alternative order of thought. ‘Philosophy begins and ends in platitude’ wrote Wittgenstein’s pupil Wisdom. It is difficult to conceive a more explicit and blanket endorsement of the categories of the ongoing society. The intelligentsia who were the principal practitioners of the new ‘therapy’ have been well situated by Gellner: ‘We have here a sub-group consisting of people who belong to, or emulate, the upper class in manner; who differentiate themselves from the heartier rest of the upper class by a kind of heightened sensibility and preciousness, and, at the same time, from the non-U kind of intelligentsia by a lack of interest in ideas, argument, fundamentals or reform. Both of these differentiations are essential to such a group, and both

²⁵ *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir*, Norman Malcolm, London 1958, pp. 36 and 58.

²⁶ *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford 1953 p. 49.

²⁷ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 1956–57, p. 8.

are conspicuously present.²⁸ The assiduous praise of ordinary language and aversion for technical concepts paradoxically produced a purely technical philosophy, entirely dissociated from the ordinary concerns of social life.

The technicism of contemporary English philosophy has thus necessarily been a philistinism. Its most striking general characteristic, in this respect, is a complacent illiteracy. Wittgenstein knew virtually nothing of the history of philosophy, was devoid of any sociological or economic culture, and had only a very limited repertoire of literary reference. A vague religiosity and naïve moralism form the barren backdrop to his work, as his memorialists show: wistful yearnings for Tolstoy mingled with echoes of Schopenhauer. This impoverished personal culture determined his thought quite centrally, as will be seen. The intellectual life of the twentieth century by and large passed Wittgenstein by. His outlook is well summed up by his friend Paul Engelmann, who writes of 'his loyalty towards all legitimate authority, whether religious or social. This attitude towards all *genuine* authority was so much second nature to him that revolutionary convictions of whatever kind appeared to him throughout his life simply as "immoral".'²⁹ This pathetic conformity evokes a stupefied peasant of Central Europe, not a critical philosopher. Wittgenstein's successors were on the whole no better equipped. Nothing reveals the intellectual void in which English philosophy has developed more than its basic premise of timelessness. The whole Wittgensteinian theory of language, in effect, presupposes an unchanging corpus of concepts and an unalterable pattern of the contexts governing them.³⁰ Only a total historical amnesia could produce such a

²⁸ *Words and Things*, London 1959, pp. 241-242. All critics of English philosophy owe a great debt to Gellner's classic. It is significant that it has never been answered by linguistic orthodoxy, and so panicked its official representatives that discussion of it was forbidden in *Mind*. Linguistic philosophy wrote its own sociology, in this episode. Gellner has advanced the idea in a later essay that linguistic philosophy must be seen partly as a displaced reaction to the successes of the natural sciences, which have threatened the traditional role of the discipline ('The Crisis in the Humanities and the Mainstream of Philosophy' in *Crisis in the Humanities*, ed. J. H. Plumb, London 1964). This explanation lacks any international perspective, however: linguistic philosophy is a phenomenon of the Anglo-Saxon world, but the successes of the natural sciences are universal. Gellner's most recent contribution is a devastation of the parasitic creepers from linguistic philosophy onto the social sciences—'Enter The Philosophers', *Times Literary Supplement*, April 4 1968.

²⁹ *Letters from Ludwig Wittgenstein with a Memoir*, Paul Engelmann, Oxford 1967, p. 121.

³⁰ David Pole's lucid book *The Later Philosophy of Wittgenstein* (London, 1958) develops the same criticism as that advanced here: 'It is clearly possible to change existing linguistic practice; and one can sensibly claim that the innovation is better than the accepted form. Wittgenstein's account seems to allow no appeal beyond existing practice, and we must ask how it is to accommodate this possibility I speak of. Ultimately, I believe, it cannot; it splits, I shall maintain on this rock... (Wittgenstein) has explicitly laid it down that our ordinary expressions are 'in order as they are', and has forbidden philosophers to tamper with them. But the difficulty goes deeper. His own system makes no provision for the adoption of any new way of speaking in conflict with existing practice.' (p. 57). Pole's own thesis is centred on the notion that it is rational argument and agreement that produces new forms of language. This is an evidently idealist solution. Who decides what is 'rational'? Pole's formulation virtually admits its own deficiencies: 'The essence of rational discourse is the search for agreement. Wittgenstein's failure to take account of it, I suggest, prejudices his whole picture of language... Clearly to call a statement

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view. The whole intellectual evolution of the West has been a process of concept-formation and rejection. No extra-terrestrial, absolute standpoint is needed to establish the intertemporal contingency of language. The truth is the opposite. It was Wittgenstein who evacuated time from language, and thereby converted it into an ahistorical absolute. He was able to do this because he lacked any notion of contradiction. The idea that linguistic change proceeds by an *internal* dialectic generated by incompatibilities between different rule-systems within it, which give rise to radically *new* concepts at determinate historical moments, was beyond his horizon. It presupposed an idea of language as neither a monist unity (*Tractatus*) nor a heteroclitite plurality (*Investigations*), but as a complex totality, necessarily inhabited by different contradictions. It is striking that today, French philosophy is largely concentrated on the problem of the *conditions of appearance of new concepts*—precisely the problem that English philosophy is designed to avert. The work of Canguilhem and Bachelard is a close study of the historical emergence in the west of the scientific concepts which revolutionized biology and physics. Such an inquiry is a diametric opposite of the whole drift of Wittgenstein's philosophy, and indicates its parochialism. To emphasise the social nature of language, as he did, is not enough: language is a structure with a history, and it has a history because its contradictions and discrepancies themselves are determined by other levels of social practice. The magical harmony of language affirmed by English philosophy was itself merely the transcript of a historically becalmed society.

8. Political Theory

An atemporal philosophy produces a disembodied political theory. Berlin, a contemporary and intimate of Austin, gravitated towards the study of political ideas early in his career. His conviction of their importance, anomalous in his professional milieu, perhaps derived from his adolescent experience of the Russian Revolution. At all events, his concern was largely prophylactic. Philosophers, he argued, ought to criticize political doctrines. If they do not, these ideas 'sometimes acquire an unchecked momentum and an irresistible power over multitudes of men'.³¹ The dangers of such 'fanatically held social and politically doctrines' could only be conjured by philosophical vigilance. Berlin thought his colleagues, preoccupied by 'their magnificent achievements' in analytic philosophy, tended to 'neglect the field of political thought, because its unstable subject-matter, with its blurred edges, is not to be caught by fixed concepts, abstract models and fine instruments suitable to logic or to linguistic analysis'.³² Thus the

rational is not to assert that all men ever will, or even might, agree about it; for some are always too stupid or too prejudiced. It is to assert, we may tautologically say, that all men would agree, supposing they were rational.' (p. 59) The naive psychologism of 'some are always too stupid or too prejudiced' is not an aberration: it is inherent in contemporary English philosophy. So much for the epoch-making turmoil of the Renaissance, the Reformation or the Enlightenment! The obvious fact is that important conceptual disputes have nothing to do with psychological differences—they are grounded in the given structure of knowledge at any moment of time and in social conflicts.

³¹ *Two Concepts of Liberty*, Oxford 1958, p. 4.

³² *Ibid.*

difference between this method and theirs was merely one of the degree of precision of their respective objects. Ordinary language, in this curious argument, was stable and exact; political concepts were, alas, unstable and blurred. Hence philosophical study of the latter was assimilated to a vaguer variant of the analysis of the former. Nothing else changed. Political theory became a timeless elucidation of concepts, divorced from any historical or sociological context. The *locus classicus* of this procedure is Berlin's essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*, the most influential text of its genre. Here Berlin counterposes two hypostasized constructions: 'negative' freedom—the ability to act without interference, and 'positive' freedom—the achievement of self-determination by the subject. The argument proceeds by a constructed 'logical' development of ideas, projected into some ethereal empyrean, and dispenses with anything so mundane as quotation. The result is two opposed lineages, which function very much as mythical genealogies in the Bible. The idea of negative freedom is attributed to Bentham, Mill, Constant and De Tocqueville; the ideal of positive freedom to the Stoics, Spinoza, Kant, Rousseau, Fichte, Hegel, Marx and Green. Neutrality between the two is momentarily feigned: 'The satisfaction that each of them seeks is an ultimate value which, both historically and morally, has an equal right to be classed among the deepest interests of mankind.'³³ The true intention, however, is not long hidden. A few pages later, Berlin writes: 'The negative liberty seems to me a truer and more humane ideal than the goals of those who seek in the great, disciplined authoritarian structures the ideal of 'positive' self-mastery by classes, and peoples, or the whole of mankind.'³⁴ This flagrant self-contradiction is inherent in the intellectual method itself. For the same ideal which inspires 'Kant's severe individualism', we are told, now informs 'totalitarian doctrines' today. Why is this genealogy necessary? The design of the whole exercise, in fact, is to discredit a prefabricated notion of 'positive freedom'—responsible for modern dictatorship and the extinction of liberty, by its separation of the concept of self-determination from the empirical attitudes of the individual. But the very insubstantiality of this entity is precisely what demands the hallucinating amalgam of thinkers alleged to have fathered it: the accumulation of names is all that lends the illusion of substance.

Political theory, thus conceived, extrapolates ideas from history and transforms them into weightless counters that are manipulated at will in the space of ideology. The end-product is typically a mythical genealogy in which ideas generate themselves in a manichean morality tale, whose teleological outcome is the present: struggle of the free world against totalitarian communism. It is no accident that Popper, on a much vaster canvas, exemplifies the same procedure in *The Open Society and its Enemies*. The problematic and its answer are the same; only the tone and terminology differ. The dualism of 'negative' and 'positive' freedom is repeated in that of the 'open' and 'closed' society. The latter culminates, predictably, in 'modern totalitarianism', which itself is 'only an episode within the perennial revolt against freedom and reason'³⁵—

³³ Ibid, p. 52.

³⁴ Ibid, p. 56.

³⁵ *The Open Society and its Enemies*, London 1952, Vol. II, p. 80.

law of human nature that is mysteriously exempt from Popper's strictures against the formulation of invariable historical laws. The same supra-historical conflation is used: Plato, Aristotle, Hegel and Marx are all enemies of the same Open Society. Popper was obsessed by these mythical constructions. *The Poverty of Historicism* is dedicated to the 'countless men and women of all creeds and nations' who were victims of 'the fascist and communist belief in Inexorable Laws of Historical Destiny'. Who are the philosophical culprits of this historicism? Conflation here produces the same grotesque results as with Berlin. Much of this work dedicated to the victims of fascism and communism is devoted to attacking—John Stuart Mill. This *reductio ad absurdum* of the method indicates the complete vacuity of the concept itself. Popper defines historicism as follows: 'I mean by "historicism" an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim.'³⁶ Hegel, of course—arch-historicist for Popper—explicitly refused all historical prediction. Historicist prophecies are said by Popper to include belief in absolute laws in history, whereas scientific predictions are based on trends. Marx and Lenin, of course, repeatedly emphasised that they analysed tendencies of social development, not absolute laws, and that therefore the predictions of natural science were impossible in history.³⁷ Popper's innocence of sociology, which he championed as an antidote to historicism, was equally total. His cherished advocacy of methodological individualism (all statements about society are reducible to statements about individuals) would have been impossible had he been aware of the classic texts of the discipline: Durkheim's discussion of 'social facts' (*Rules of Sociological Method*) and Parsons's discussion of 'emergent properties' (*The Structure of Social Action*).

Hypostasization and conflation were normal in English social philosophy. Popper, however, a competent philosopher of science, was an amateur at even the rudimentary skills of this form of political theory. His discussion of Hegel is of a tenor that defies belief. The German philosopher was a 'paid agent', a 'servile lackey', a 'charlatan', a 'clown', whose works were a 'farce', written in 'gibberish' that was a 'despicable perversion of everything that is decent.'³⁸ The paranoia here was genuine: it produced its own pathological imagery. 'The Hegelian farce has done enough harm. We must stop it. We must speak—even at the price of soiling ourselves by touching this scandalous thing.'³⁹ Popper's rantings—inconceivable outside England at the time—are significant, because they provide a limiting case of the possibilities of dehistoricized political 'theory'. His entire diatribe against Hegel, in fact, was based on complete historical ignorance, as has been meticulously shown by a fellow-liberal, Kaufmann.⁴⁰ Yet this travesty was never challenged within England for a decade, because it was so natural to the methodological framework of English political theory.

³⁶ *The Poverty of Historicism*, London 1957, p. 3.

³⁷ See 'Technology and Social Relations', Georg Lukács, *New Left Review* 39.

³⁸ *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Vol. II, pp. 27–80.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁴⁰ 'The Hegel Myth and its Method' in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Walter Kaufmann, London 1959.

It should be emphasized that the extrapolation characteristic of the discipline is not merely from the political or social history as such. It is also, and crucially, from the other social sciences adjacent to political thought, and which have traditionally been so integrated with it as to be inseparable. The most striking case is economics. Berlin mentions the word 'property' exactly twice in his whole treatise of liberty. It is totally absent from his conceptual analysis. Yet it is overwhelmingly clear that no serious discussion of the various political theories of liberty can be dissociated from the concomitant theories of property. The classic demonstration came from a Canadian, four years after Berlin's essay. MacPherson's *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* showed conclusively that the very meaning of freedom in Hobbes and Locke was unintelligible outside their notion of property: freedom for them, *was* property of one's own person in a market society where he who sold his capacities (his labour) ceased by their definition to be free, and entitled to political suffrage. The inextricability of liberty and property in seventeenth century England was decisively established by Macpherson. He did not re-insert Hobbes and Locke into their social class and interpret their theories in the light of their origin: he re-inserted their theories into their integral intellectual context, and thereby illuminated their relation to their class. He did this simply by remarrying politics and economics. He thereby revolutionized the subject. Macpherson's subsequent work on Mill, Green and marginal economics, has amply vindicated the central importance of 'economic assumptions in political theory'.⁴¹ By doing so, it has potentially redrawn the discipline. But the dominant pattern in English political theory is proof against solitary and alien dissent. It continues to operate a permanent abstraction of political ideas from economic ideas, and from either political or economic history.

9. History

Ideas divorced from history are matched by a history voided of ideas. Namierism is the obverse of English political philosophy. In this case however, a powerful and original intelligence produced genuinely new knowledge. The very inability of his disciples to reproduce Namier's achievements is testimony of their novelty. This novelty was never systematized by Namier, who studded his own thought with cultural and political curios.

Namier was an expatriate in England who became a super-patriot. He believed in the paramount attainments of the English and expressed general contempt for any other peoples and cultures. Thus he could write of 'German political incapacity and deadness',⁴² 'French ideas adaptable in their rootless superficiality'⁴³ and Austria, where 'Vienna has never produced anything truly great or creative'.⁴⁴ A functionary in the Foreign Office during the First World War, he vigorously advocated the liquidation of Austro-Hungary and the elimination of

⁴¹ 'Post-Liberal Democracy', C. B. MacPherson, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, October 1964.

⁴² *Vanished Supremacies*, p. 49.

⁴³ *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 39.

⁴⁴ *Vanished Supremacies*, p. 28.

German influence from Eastern Europe. 'The future of the white race,' he wrote 'lies with Empires, that is those nations which hold vast expanses of land outside Europe.'⁴⁵ These attitudes were not accidental or tangential to his work. They determined its distinctive dual structure. One half of it was devoted to a meticulous and reverent study of the power structure of landed England in the 18th century. The other half was devoted to brilliant and acrid reflections on the history of continental Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries. Namier's studies of the epoch of George III were a milestone in English historiography, because they constituted, for the first time, a truly *structural analysis* of the power system at that date, and of the composition of the ruling class. Demolishing the myth of two antagonistic political parties divided on social-ideological lines, he showed the class unity of eighteenth century parliaments, and the immediate material interests which governed political fortunes and allegiances within it (corruption and clientelage). For the first time, history was written which virtually ignored chronology: Namier disdained the babble of narrative. His massive, stony edifices were acceptable to British historians, because of the immense infrastructure of factual minutiae on which they were founded. His empirical standards were above reproach. Namier's structural method was perfectly adapted to the tranquil social stability of eighteenth-century England. He saw it as a society which miraculously had achieved a territorial nationality,⁴⁶ based on freedom from foreign invasion, and the gradual growing together of different ethnic and linguistic communities made possible by it. Namier thought that only such a territorial nationality could produce liberty. This he identified with parliamentary sovereignty. Parliamentary institutions in turn demanded a hierarchical social structure. England was uniquely blessed in possessing these conditions of freedom. The 18th century saw the birth of the political system which was the token of its privilege.

Nineteenth and twentieth century Europe provided a diametric contrast to this idyllic picture. Namier analyzed the whole evolution of continental Europe from 1789 to 1945 as the deleterious triumph of nationalism and democracy. He regarded both as the enemy of liberty. All the terms of his argument were reversed on the continent. There, territorial nationality on the English model was absent. There was first the dynastic, denationalized State that was the multifarious property of its ruler—the Habsburg Empire, *par excellence*. Then there was its equally pernicious opposite—the linguistic and racial nation preached by Mazzini, Kossuth and the German Parliament of 1848. This idea was the historical content of nationalism, and it was indissolubly linked to democracy. Democracy for Namier was 'a levelling of classes' and not 'constitutional growth'. Social equality he believed to be flatly incompatible with political liberty. 'Oligarchy is of the essence of Parliament, which requires an articulated society for basis. Elections presuppose superiorities. . . .'⁴⁷ The insistence that 'acknowledged superiorities there must be' naturally produced a vision of modern

⁴⁵ *Germany and Eastern Europe*, London 1915, p. 128.

⁴⁶ It is odd that there has been so little awareness of the central role of this concept in Namier's historical thought. His whole work is articulated on it.

⁴⁷ *Voxes et Supremacies*, p. 79.

European history as an unrelieved process of decline. Namier's analyses of the France of Louis Napoleon, the Germany of the Hohenzollerns, the Austro-Hungary of the Habsburgs, the Europe of Versailles, are all equally mordant and sombre. An inexorable deterioration sets in after the French Revolution, which works its effects in Europe until, after the end of the Second World War, Namier thought the concept itself had disappeared: 'Indeed' he finally asked, 'what remains of Europe, of its history and its politics?'⁴⁸

Namier executes this fresco with the greatest artistry. But what is striking about it is that it records a decline that it never explains. Namier was not mystified about the existence of classes or the conflict of their interests: indeed his awareness of them was the core of his analysis of the power structure of eighteenth-century England, and his candid appraisal of the sociological character of British parliamentarism. But he lacked any dynamic theory of historical movement. This was a consequence of the peculiar character of his materialism. The charge that he 'took the mind out of history' was one that he proudly accepted. It meant that he radically devalued the importance of ideas in promoting historical change. Mindless history here complements timeless philosophy: the mediate symmetry of Wittgenstein and Namier is evident. The career of an intellectual like Berlin provides the middle term. What Namier substituted for 'mind', however, is what is important here. 'What matters most is the underlying emotions, the music, to which ideas are a mere libretto, often of very inferior quality; and once the emotions have ebbed, the ideas, established high and dry, become doctrine, or at best innocuous clichés.'⁴⁹ Ideas were thus reduced to emotions. The ultimate instance of history is psychology. Namier thought that his work was inspired by his appreciation of Freud, but in fact he showed little knowledge or understanding of Freud's work, and never made any serious application of it to his historiography. His credo was actually a vulgar psychologism—as Gareth Stedman Jones has pointed out, much more akin to Nietzsche's notions of the basic motive behind the lofty sentiment. Now such a psychologism inevitably presupposes a fixed human nature. It is therefore totally inoperative as a principle of change. Hence the curious paradox of Namier's passionate belief in psychology. It is both central to his theory, and quite marginal to his practice. For by underlying every thing, it explains nothing. It is consequently only introduced as a banal coda, when the work of concrete analysis is done. 'I refrain from inquiring into the sense of the envenomed struggles we have witnessed for such an inquiry would take us into inscrutable depths or into a airy void. Possibly there is no more sense in human history than in the changes of the seasons or the movements of the stars; or if sense there be, it escapes our perception.'⁵⁰ The role of Namier's psychologism is manifest in this formulation. It precludes any general theory of historical change. The absence of meaning in history has a dual signification. It indicates that purposive human action, controlled by ideas, does not govern the course of events: 'there is no free will in the thinking +

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 209.

⁴⁹ *Personalities and Powers*, p. 4.

⁵⁰ *Vanished Spectacles*, p. 203.

the masses, any more than in the revolutions of the planets, in the migrations of birds, and in the plunging of hordes of lemmings into the sea.⁵¹ But it also indicates that Namier, once he had adopted the premise of an immutable substratum of irrational emotions and passions, had no principle of *explanation* available to him. Thus the gathering avalanche of nationalism and democracy in Europe after 1789 was depicted and denounced by Namier: but it was never rendered causally intelligible. In this sense, the dictum that 'history has no meaning' is a translation of the fact that Namier's history had no *motor*. The distance between this materialism and that of Marx is obvious. Marx always emphasised the importance of ideas within any social structure, and dialectically related the two in such a manner that his theory coded the historical changes produced by the disjunctures between them.

In Namier's European writings, time exists only as dilapidation. His insights persist: but their context has altered. His superb structural examination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire closes with its disintegration. His secular account of the geopolitical pattern of European diplomacy—an extraordinary tour de force generated by his peculiar perception of the State as a historical entity—ends with the submergence of Europe. Namier's legacy to English historiography was thus inevitably equivocal. His structuralism was rapidly suppressed from memory. The two best-known historians today divide his minor bequests. Trevor-Roper inherited Namier's acute sensitivity to the State, as a material complex of power and prebends. He used this to sketch perhaps the most coherent general interpretation of seventeenth-century politics yet produced—the crisis of the Renaissance State.⁵² Elsewhere, his writings are erratic and eclectic. Namier's main self-proclaimed disciple has been Trevor-Roper's opponent in controversy. Taylor inherited Namier's philistinism about ideas, and his xenophobia, and caricatured them. He converted the microscopic study of structures into its opposite—a trivial and conventional narrative: the apparent accumulation of minutiae link the two, as if Namier had merely produced a census. Few disciples have ever betrayed their master so completely. Namier's political outlook was frankly regressive, but in England his approach to history was intellectually advanced. Its virtues have generally been forgotten, and its faults exaggerated. A new school of history has in the last decade emerged on the Left, quite outside his tradition—but this is another subject. Within the dominant orthodoxy that followed Namier, history without ideas slowly became a drought of ideas about history.

10. Economics

The insulation of political theory from economic thought duplicates an earlier division: the emergence of 'economics' after the disappearance of 'political economy'. This time, the shift was general, in all Western countries. The advent of marginalism marked the birth of an economic science, ostensibly free from political or sociological variables. What this meant, of course, was that they were pushed outside the conscious

⁵¹ *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 41.

⁵² *Renaissance, Reformation and Social Change*, London 1967 (the two initial essays).

focus of the system, and became its silent, unconscious preconditions. Equilibrium theory claimed to be a pure logic of the market: in fact, it underwrote it ideologically by relegating the notion of monopoly to a special case and excluding the very idea of a planned economy: socialism. Neo-classical theory rationalized laissez-faire at the very historical moment that it had been superseded, with the new economy of imperialism. It was incapable of providing any solution to the crises of Western capitalism after the First World War. Keynes's enormous merit was to have seen that the whole categorical system of neo-classical economics needed to be recast. At first prompted by elementary political pragmatism, he merely advocated the practical measures necessary to stabilize British capitalism: then, a decade later, he provided the theory for them. *The General Theory of Employment, Money and Interest* represented a tremendous intellectual advance, precisely because it integrated two conceptual systems that had previously been quite separate, into a new synthesis. Monetary theory and employment theory were regarded by neo-classical economics as completely distinct topics, with no intrinsic connection between them. Only three years before the publication of *The General Theory*, Pigou had written his *Theory of Unemployment* without seriously discussing the problem of investment. Keynes' achievement was thus a 'retotalization' of his field. He was well aware of this: 'When I began to write my *Treatise on Money* I was still moving along the traditional lines of regarding the influence of money as something so to speak separate from the general theory of supply and demand. . . . This book, on the other hand, has evolved into what is primarily a study of the forces which determine changes in the scale of output and employment as a whole; and, whilst it is found that money enters into the scheme in an essential and peculiar manner, technical monetary detail falls into the background. A monetary economy, we shall find, is essentially one in which changing views about the future are capable of influencing the quantity of employment and not merely its direction. But our method of analyzing the economic behaviour at the present under the influence of changing ideas about the future is one which depends on the interaction of supply and demand, and is in this way linked up with our fundamental theory of value.'⁵³ This synthesis naturally produced its own concepts. The ideas of liquidity preference and the multiplier were not simply additions to the existing canon. They reformulated the whole system, by knocking away the assumption of a stationary equilibrium. Both concepts, of course, presuppose a dynamic framework. Keynes thus effectively reintroduced time into orthodox economic theory, thereby revolutionizing it. This was the

⁵³ *The General Theory of Employment, Money and Interest*, London 1964, pp. vi-vii. The limitations of Keynes's unification are evident; he substituted a new partition for the old one, by introducing the distinction between micro-economics and macro-economics. 'The division of Economics between the Theory of Value and Distribution on the one hand and the Theory of Money on the other hand is, I think, false division. The right dichotomy is, I suggest, between the Theory of the Individual Industry or Firm and of the rewards and the distribution between different uses of a given quantity of resources on the one hand, and the Theory of Output and Employment as a whole on the other hand.' *The General Theory*, p. 293. This new division is, of course, one of the foundations of contemporary orthodox economics. By contrast, it is no accident that the procedure of Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* (for example) is built precisely on the unity of the two: the theory of the firm is simultaneously and inseparably the theory of the economy.

mark of the greatness of his thought. It was also its ambiguous limitation. For the Keynesian temporality is a very restricted one: it is brief and cyclical. 'In the long-run, we are all dead.' Keynes accepted capitalism, but without zeal or sanctimony. He was mainly concerned with assuring its immediate stability, not justifying it *sub specie aeternitatis*. This both prevented him from ever becoming an official ideologue of the status quo like so many economists, and from developing a deeper and longer dynamic perspective. His contemporary Kalecki, who in contradistinction to Keynes was aware of the work of Marx, achieved some of the same countercyclical insights, albeit in fragmentary form, but saw the ulterior implications of them. By reinserting Keynesian categories into a rudimentary political economy, he was able to predict what he called the 'political trade-cycle', which has since become the principal economic contradiction of advanced capitalism: the conflict between full employment and stable prices.

After Keynes, it was no longer possible to develop economic theory within the old equilibrium framework. The temporal dimension he introduced was there to stay. The next step was logical: the emergence of growth theory as such. Here, however, the inherent limits of orthodox economic theory checked its own spontaneous trajectory. The preoccupation with growth which is the distinguishing feature of post-Keynesian economics should logically have returned it to political economy (and its apex, Marx). For the reproduction of capital was central to Marx's concerns. But political economy was forbidden, for obvious reasons: it by definition put the socio-economic system as a whole in question. The result was that growth theory developed on an essentially *ad hoc* basis, with an accretion of hypotheses wherever possible abstracted from the property regime. This is particularly clear in its initial formulation by Harrod. He simply added technical invention—the least *social* variable available—to the Keynesian model, to produce an equation for progress.⁵⁴ Subsequent demonstrations that technology does not determine the rate of capital accumulation merely scattered the arena into divergent and piecemeal hypotheses, which have never been unified into any general theory. Time now haunts orthodox economic theory, but it is unable to dominate it. Patent evidence of the failure to effect the transition from Keynes's short-run economics to a true long-run economics is the impotence of British economic orthodoxy to provide any coherent theory of Britain's present economic crisis. The national predicament has obsessed public debate for five years now; all political discussion has revolved on it. In that time, innumerable unrelated or contradictory explanations for the crisis have been advanced by British economists. The most influential has doubtless been Kaldor's, which attributes Britain's post-war economic decline to a shortage of cheap labour from the primary sector, due to the uniquely rationalized English agriculture of the last

⁵⁴ 'An Essay in Dynamic Theory', *Economic Journal*, March 1939. The role of technique is implicit, not explicit in Harrod's formula. It is assumed to check the diminishing rate of return on investment, and thereby render output per unit of capital constant. The ostensible focus of Harrod's essay is propensity to save, but variations of this are not explained within the model. Hence the determinant role effectively reverts to technique, which is taken as autonomous.

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century.⁵⁵ The generalized inadequacy of these accounts is patent. It is as plain as day that Britain's economic crisis has more than one major cause; that these causes are not randomly or equivalently related, but form a complex *hierarchy*; and that they englobe the socio-political structure of contemporary Britain. But orthodox economics has proved completely unable *either* to construct a hierarchical model of the causality of the crisis (not merely a plural one), *or* to integrate the economic end-product into the political and historical totality from which it is so manifestly articulated. The physical co-option of so many economists—Kaldor, Balogh, Neild, Seers and *innumerable*—into a foundering government has merely underlined its intellectual bankruptcy. The crisis persists, unabated.

Despite all its technical advances in mathematization, formal economics in England has been unable to grapple with the practical issues which confront it. Retrospectively, Keynes's magnitude has grown. He was perhaps the last great social thinker produced by the English bourgeoisie, with all the largeness and generosity of once confident liberalism. His theoretical system was validated practically; yet he never became a fanatic advocate of the social order to whose temporary salvation he contributed so much. He never hesitated to pronounce outside his subject, on a gamut of topics which recalls that of his contemporaries, Russell and Lawrence. It is characteristic that he could write a brief memoir of them which situates that trio perhaps better than any work of cultural history since.⁵⁶ Keynes was an intellectual in the classical tradition.⁵⁷

His international reputation lent British economics a peculiar status among its fellow-disciplines. But, as has been seen, it was unable to enhance it after him. His own definition of the qualities necessary to be a great economist is a standing indictment of his successors: 'The master-economist must possess a rare combination of gifts. He must reach a high standard in several different directions and must combine talents not often found together. He must be mathematician, historian, statesman, philosopher—in some degree. He must understand symbols and speak in words. He must contemplate the particular in terms of the general, and touch abstract and concrete in the same flight of thought. He must study the present in the light of the past for the purposes of the future. No part of man's nature or his institutions must be entirely outside his regard.'⁵⁸ This statement of faith has been quietly forgotten. Today, routine and mediocrity have settled over the discipline. Its

⁵⁵ *Causes of the Slow Rate of Economic Growth of the United Kingdom*, Cambridge 1966. Kaldor explicitly discounts such other causal factors as the balance of payments or the rate of investment (pp. 16 and 25). The idea of an overdetermined crisis has evidently not occurred to him. It is perhaps not surprising that the one reasonably comprehensive and cogent account of the crisis has been produced by an economic historian, not an economist—Eric Hobsbawm's *Industry and Empire*.

⁵⁶ 'My Early Beliefs', in *Two Memoirs*, London 1949.

⁵⁷ Keynes was very conscious of his sociological ancestry. He wrote in *Essays in Biography*: 'I have sought . . . to bring out the solidarity and historical continuity of the High Intelligentsia of England, who have built up the foundations of our thought in the two and a half centuries since Locke, in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, wrote the first modern English book.' p. viii.

⁵⁸ *Essays in Biography*, London 1933, p. 170.

superior pedigree has not enabled it to produce so much as a Galbraith—an average economist bold enough to formulate some general propositions about the structure and tendency of monopolized capitalism. Staffa, its one genuine pioneer, has been ignored. Technique has become a substitute for theory. Dissociated from political economy, and checked short of secular history, British economics has visibly stagnated.

IX. Psychology

Namier believed that ideas were merely rationalizations of emotions. Political ideas, in particular, were the camouflaged expressions of unconscious attitudes and passions. This reductionism was independently reproduced, with the utmost fidelity, in the discipline of psychology itself. Eysenck, who presided pervasively over English psychology after the Second World War, tried to classify political beliefs systematically by relating them to psychological attitudes. *The Psychology of Politics* is a monument to crude psychologism. It opens with this classic credo: 'Psychology so conceived has one advantage over other disciplines which makes it of particular interest and importance. Political actions are actions of human beings; the study of the direct causes of these actions is the field of the study of psychology. All other social sciences deal with variables which affect political behaviour indirectly. . . The psychologist has no need of such intermediaries; he is in direct contact with the central link in the chain of causation between antecedent condition and resultant action.'⁵⁹ This characteristic illusion has never been more clearly expressed: the belief in a fundamental psyche which is prior to societal determinations, and which may therefore be considered the immediate pivot of social action.

Eysenck constructed an attitude chart destined to show the emotional convergence of extremisms (left or right) and counterpose them to a solid centre of moderation. Politically, the effect of this was to establish an identification between fascism and communism—contrasted with 'democratic' creeds such as conservatism or liberalism: a typical enterprise of the Cold War. The pseudo-categories of 'tough-mindedness' and 'tender-mindedness' were superimposed on the categories of 'radicalism' and 'conservatism' to achieve this result. Totalitarians of all persuasions proved, of course, to be 'tough-minded'. Eysenck dilated at length on the similarity of test-scores between Communists and Fascists, which showed the temperamental peculiarities of those with these beliefs. Eysenck dedicated his work to the hope of 'a society more interested in psychology than politics'. This inimitable declaration is a self-definition. Eysenck is a special case in the gallery of expatriates. All the others show some intellectual originality; Popper himself, however jejune his political writings, was a respectable philosopher of natural science. Eysenck is not of the same category. A crusading publicist, he has dominated his subject more by prolific output than by any unanimously acknowledged precellence. But this should not lead to an under-

⁵⁹ *The Psychology of Politics*, London 1954, pp. 9-10.

estimation of his historical importance. After the war, Eysenck developed the use of factor analysis, a basic methodological tool of experimental psychology, in England. He thereby rapidly achieved wide prestige and influence. In these years, Eysenck became the symbol of a new, aggressive scientism. The success generated by the initial lack of any serious challenge to him bore fruit in an ample range of works, pronouncing on the psychology of: politics, crime, intelligence tests, mental illness, smoking and numerous other topics. No other psychologist in England can rival a fraction of this output.

In the course of its production, however, Eysenck undoubtedly overreached himself. Today, his works have been subjected to criticism by colleagues even in this positivist discipline *par excellence*. The erosion of his relative immunity started, appropriately enough, with the devastating exposé by three Americans—Rokeach, Hanley and Christie—of *The Psychology of Politics*. Subjecting it to scrupulous statistical, methodological and conceptual checks, they concluded that Eysenck had misinterpreted his data, miscalculated his statistics, and misconstrued his results. In particular, they decided that there was no similarity between Communists and Fascists, even on Eysenck's own unscientific evidence: 'Eysenck arbitrarily lumps Communists and Fascists together in an attempt to indicate their similarity . . . It is clear that Eysenck's Communist samples are neither "tough-minded" nor "authoritarian" when the data produced as evidence by Eysenck are carefully examined.'⁶⁰ The very concept of tough-mindedness was fictive—a product of Eysenck's arbitrary statistical procedures. 'Our analysis leads us to the conclusion that tough-mindedness-tender-mindedness, as conceived and measured by Eysenck, has no basis in fact. It is based on miscalculations and a disregard for a significant portion of his data. It conceals rather than reveals the attitudinal differences among existing groups.'⁶¹ Eysenck's replies did not convince his critics. Christie's restatement of his judgment is memorable. *The Psychology of Politics* contains: 'Errors of computation, uniquely biased samples which forbid any generalizations, scales with built-in biases which do not measure what they purport to measure, unexplained inconsistencies within the data, misinterpretations and contradictions of the relevant research of others, and unjustifiable manipulation of the data. Any one of Eysenck's many errors is sufficient to raise serious questions about the validity of his conclusions. *In toto*, absurdity is compounded upon absurdity, so that where, if anywhere, the truth lies is impossible to determine.'⁶²

The Psychology of Politics is an expression of the discipline from which it emerged and which permitted it. It is symptomatic that Eysenck's book was eventually denounced, not by English colleagues, but by American psychologists.⁶³ Discrete criticisms of other aspects of his work followed. But it is significant that his public renown in England—built on innumerable broadcasts, articles and paperbacks—has been virtually

⁶⁰ 'Eysenck's Treatment of the Personality of Communists', Richard Christie, in *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 53, November 1956, p. 425.

⁶¹ 'Eysenck's Tender-mindedness Dimension: A Critique', Milton Rokeach and Charles Hanley, in *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 53, March 1956, p. 175.

⁶² 'Some Abuses of Psychology', Richard Christie, in *Psychological Bulletin* Vol. 53, November 1956, p. 450.

⁶³ There is a parallel with Kaufmann's exposure of Popper here. In both cases,

unaffected. To a greater extent than any other of the émigrés discussed here, he is popularly identified with his subject. There is good reason for this. Despite various reservations about Eysenck's writings, no English psychologist has yet written a critique of his work as a whole. Scattered objections do not constitute a considered intellectual rejection. Eysenck thus continues, from his chair at the Maudsley, to symbolize psychology and preach psychologism in England. His very defects are his significance: the quality of his work is an index of the receptivity of the culture to its assumptions.

12. Aesthetics

The model sector for psychology as a discipline has traditionally been perception. The psychological study of perception has yielded the most rapid and reliable scientific results, and has consequently exerted a general influence on the orientation of the discipline. In England, however, a significant reprise has occurred. The dominant aesthetics has been derived from the psychology of perception. Gombrich's *Art and Illusion*—an intelligent and erudite development of theories of perception—is today the consensually acclaimed orthodoxy. Gombrich may be said to dominate the theory of pictorial art as his companion Popper did the theory of the natural sciences.

This influence is not self-explanatory. Art history and aesthetics have been an enclave in British culture much more completely colonized than any other by expatriates. Given the time-honoured philistinism of the intelligentsia delineated by Annan, this is not particularly surprising. The great majority of scholars who have produced serious works on painting, sculpture or architecture in England have been Germans or Austrians: Saxl, Wittkower, Wind, Antal, Pevsner and others. The primacy enjoyed by Gombrich is not explicable merely by reason of his merits. Once again, the filtering mechanism already discussed has been at work. Traditional British culture has an elective affinity with certain types of expatriate and not others. It promotes what is attuned to its own inherited nature, and suppresses what is dissonant with it. Antal, one of the greatest contemporary historians of Florentine art, was a Marxist scholar: he never received official acclamation, and appears never to have been offered a university appointment. Gombrich, intimate and associate of Von Hayek and Popper, has been canonized by established culture.

Why? The answer is that Gombrich's theory of art is a variant of the psychologism which is a recurring component of the culture as a system. This is not to deny its sophistication. It undoubtedly represents the most rewarding example of the phenomenon, and one which has achieved a definite advance on its terrain. Gombrich's central problem has been the relation of perception to painting. What accounts for the diversity of styles in the history of art? Basing himself on experimental psychology, Gombrich showed that perception itself is predetermined

these standards of scholarship were never challenged within England, because of the fit between their authors and the culture. Eventually, foreigners of orthodox liberal persuasion were obliged to attack the fact, but no general self-criticism or reappraisal followed in Britain.

by stable schemata. There is thus nothing natural in naturalism, as a mode of painting. The literal transcription of reality was a long and arduous achievement, after aeons of endeavour: it was never a spontaneous, unreflective gift. The difference between one age of painting and another is primarily one of *technique*, whereby a closer approximation to mirror-like accuracy becomes possible, via innumerable rectifications of the perceptual schemata which govern the painter's vision. In the course of his argument, Gombrich unfolds many acute local demonstrations. But the theory as a whole is evidently vitiated by the closed parameters of its discussion. The problem of any psychologism is to account for historical change, since the initial assumption is a self-contained, universal psyche. Gombrich solves the dilemma for his theory of art, by means of the indispensable notion of technique. Technical progress, in effect, is the minimum dose of history possible for such a problematic. For it is the most easily conceived as an asocial movement. Thus, in the case of painting, it becomes a continual amelioration of the individual's perceptual equipment, abstracted from the social structure of which he was a carrier. Gombrich's use of technique as a central concept radically dehistoricizes art, and renders it ultimately interchangeable and incomprehensible. It is one matter to show that Ancient Egyptian art was not a voluntary refusal of faithful naturalism, but preceded the very capacity for it. It is another to explain the concrete and unique deformation of representational reality which was the visual art of Ancient Egypt. Gombrich, indeed, is at a loss to comprehend it. For the principle of explanation lies, by definition, outside his range of concepts. Why is Ancient Egyptian art totally different from Ancient Chinese art that was later than it? Only the structure of the historical society in which it was produced can render this intelligible. Gombrich himself is obliged to have recourse to *ad hoc* sociological explanations to block in the gaps in his scheme. Thus Ancient Egyptian art was perhaps influenced by the priesthood, and Ancient Greek art by the rise of trade. These random hypotheses are quite external to the categories of his system. They are thrown in to buttress its incoherence—that is, where it evidently fails to account for the specificity of a form of art. It is no accident that Gombrich's chronological study is called *The Story of Art*—not its history. In it, succeeding modes of painting are described, not explained: at most, a vague action-reaction of fashion and generation are evoked, as in the literary criticism of fifty years ago. Thus Gombrich constantly produces such formulæ as this: 'We remember the feeling of uneasiness created by the brilliant messiness of impressionist 'snapshots' of fleeting sights, the longing for more order, structure and pattern that had animated the illustrators of the *Art Nouveau* with their emphasis on decorative simplification no less than such masters as Seurat and Cézanne.'⁶⁴ The flaccid circularity of such comment is evident, and the futility of their psychologism ('feeling of uneasiness', 'longing for more order' and so on). This book is a manual, not a scholarly work, but it conveys the narrowness of Gombrich's substantive theory.

Early in his career, Gombrich was uneasily aware of the inadequacy of his psychological problematic. He admitted the validity of Vasari's famous definition of the task of the art historian: to investigate the

⁶⁴ *The Story of Art*, London 1950, p. 433.

causes and roots of style—*le cause e radici delle maniere*. He had to confess a general blankness here: 'We have no theory of style which might account for its stability or its changes. . . Psychology alone can never suffice to explain the riddle of history, the riddle of particular changes. . . For me, at least, the enigma of style is wrapped in a thrilling mystery.'⁶⁵ But no sooner had he said this, than he suppressed the thought. A moment later he was dismissing Vasari's classical query as by definition unanswerable: 'I do not think we can ever hope to produce a final explanation of this type of problem.'⁶⁶ In its place, he proposed the theme which was to become the itinerary of *Art and Illusion*: 'the role of skill, of the learning process involved' in art; 'the individual and particular works of art as the work of skilled hands and great minds in response to concrete demands.'⁶⁷ The transition from one position to another eventually produced a complete and unconscious regression to the very belief which he had once formally rejected. A few years later, he was tranquilly writing of 'the shifting urges, the psychological pulls and counter-pulls that result in changes of taste and style within the context of civilization.'⁶⁸ This is exactly the formula for the vacant undulations of *The Story of Art*. In the closed space of Gombrich's pre-occupations, the psychology which was once exorcised is a revenant which necessarily returns to rule.

Theory and history have a different relationship in a true aesthetics: Vasari's question insistently demands an answer. The iconology of Erwin Panofsky approached the problem much more closely because it focussed on the *meaning* of paintings and sculptures, not merely their technique.⁶⁹ For the rules of perception and the march of technique—the individual psyche and its immanent evolution—are insufficient to differentiate the art of any society or epoch from another. The very schemata which Gombrich correctly insists govern perception are not alignable on a linear time-track. Their origin must be sought in the diverse societies in which they existed, and which themselves are amenable to no mono-evolutionary classification. Gombrich's psychologism—the construction of a theory of art based on the psychology of perception plus the accumulation of technique—simulates time, the better to abolish it. It is no accident that it lacks any purchase on twentieth century art: the problematic of representation is extinct today. An aesthetic which erases society necessarily precludes a concept of temporality. A historical sociology of art—the examination of its concrete

⁶⁵ 'Art and Scholarship' in *Meditations on a Hobby-Horse and other essays on the theory of art*, London 1963, pp. 117–118.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 117 and 119.

⁶⁸ *Meditations on a Hobby-Horse*, p. 43.

⁶⁹ Thus Panofsky wrote: 'The art historian will have to check what he thinks is the intrinsic meaning of the work, or group of works, to which he devotes his attention, against what he thinks is the intrinsic meaning of as many other documents of civilization historically related to that work or group of works, as he can master: of documents bearing witness to the political, poetical, religious, philosophical and social tendencies of the personality, period or country under investigation.' *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, New York 1955, p. 39. It is no accident that his discussion of the Egyptian-Greek contrast mentioned above is incomparably more illuminating than Gombrich's. See 'The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles' in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*. Panofsky's recent death passed virtually unnoticed in Britain.

mode of production—is a condition of its differential intelligibility. The 'psychology' of art is ultimately an interdiction of its meaning.

13. Psychoanalysis

The sectors hitherto discussed have formed an interconnecting and self-confirming cultural circuit. A verification of the analysis sketched here is provided *a contrario* by the fate of the one entirely *new* discipline to emerge within the previous orbit of the traditional 'human sciences'. This discipline was psychoanalysis. In Britain, it did not escape the general law of expatriate dominance. Melanie Klein, an Austrian who came to London after working in Berlin, formed a school or generation of psychoanalysts which after the war became the distinctively British contribution to the international spectrum of the discipline. The power and originality of Klein's work makes it perhaps the most important systematic development of psychoanalytic theory since Freud. Freud had revealed the structural significance of childhood in the formation of human character, by his epochal discovery of the unconscious. Klein extended this revolution beyond the limits of what Freud thought were possible: she pioneered a theory and a therapy capable of capturing the psychic structures of infancy—the aboriginal first months of life which precede and found the original experience theorized by Freud. Klein invented a new therapeutic practice for this radicalization of the scope of psychoanalysis. It is no accident that the two together produced a theoretical development, which provided one of the first coherent attempts at a solution of a fundamental problem left unanswered by Freud. Freud's clinical revolution was to 'produce' the intelligibility of the conduct of neurotics—previously regarded as a meaningless, physiological pathology. In his theory, it became significant human action. Freud, however, never provided a comparable general theory of the psychoses. He insisted on the fundamental conceptual difference between the two disorders, but beyond a brilliant sketch of a case of paranoia (The Schreber Affair), he never formulated an inclusive theory establishing the differential bases of neuroses and psychoses. He left his inheritors the unsolved problem of a unified theory of the two, bequeathing them only some crucial but cryptic signposts. The Kleinian bathysphere into the most submarine recesses of infancy unexpectedly produced a *sui generis* solution. By producing the concepts of successive 'paranoid' and 'depressive' positions, universally experienced in the course of infancy, Klein was able to reunite psychoses and neuroses along an evolutionary axis. Psychosis became a reversion to the paranoid position, which the patient had never properly passed; neurosis to the depressive position. The criticisms that may be made of this evolutionism are evident. There is no doubt that it represents a 'naïve' synthesis. Glover and Anna Freud subjected Klein's work to a violent environmentalist criticism in the forties, much of which was formally justified.⁷⁰ Klein's capacity for scientific formulation was not equal to her signal intellectual courage and practical intuition. The weaknesses any linear genetic account of psychological disorders need little demonstration. The objective merit of Klein's

⁷⁰ 'Examination of the Klein System of Child Psychology', Edward Glover, in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child*, Volume 1, London 1945, and the references there to the discussion of 1943-44.

work, however, was to retable the question of an unified theory. Today, the work of Laing, Cooper and Esterson represents an advance towards the production of the specific 'intelligibility' of schizophrenia which makes no concession to evolutionism. This is an uneven development: it has been accompanied by a silence on Freud which has precluded any general theory. But the preconditions of this excentric progress derive from the psychoanalytic problematic generated by Klein.

Psychoanalysis in Britain has thus in no fashion been a mediocre or infertile phenomenon. On the contrary, Klein's pupils and associates—Winnicott, Isaacs, Bion, Rosenfeld and Riviere—form one of the most flourishing schools in the world; not to speak of separate cases such as Laing or Cooper. It is now time to ask: what has been the impact of psychoanalysis on British culture in general? The irony is that it has been virtually nil. It has been sealed off as a technical enclave: an esoteric, and specialized pursuit unrelated to any of the central concerns of mainstream 'humanistic' culture. There is no Western country where the presence of psychoanalysis in general culture is so vestigial. The USA, Germany, and France—three very different examples—provide a unanimous contrast. The whole cultural matrix of these societies has been affected and transformed by the advent of psychoanalysis, which has penetrated to the centre of the common intellectual inheritance.

One has only to think of such very diverse figures, in different disciplines, as Parsons, Adorno, Levi-Strauss or Althusser, to see the direct impact of Freud on their thought. There is no comparable English thinker who has been remotely touched. A trivial index of the fundamental situation is, in fact, the mere availability of Freud's work. The *English Standard Edition* is the best in the world; its twenty-four volumes are the model for all other scholarly editions. Naturally, its circulation is very limited indeed. The converse of this specialist instrument is the virtually complete absence of any important work by Freud in paperback. This astonishing fact contrasts with the millions of copies of his major works published and sold in Germany, USA and France. It is, of course, the overt sign of a deeper cultural set. To some extent, the isolation of psychoanalysis in England was historically self-imposed. Jones and Glover, the two men most responsible for its institutionalization, were determined to prevent the confusion and vulgarization of Freud's thought that had occurred elsewhere.

The consequences of such a policy were predictable: a very limited diffusion of Freud's ideas and writings outside the professional milieu. But this, of course, was only one factor responsible. Much more important, undoubtedly, was the intellectual context which confronted psychoanalysis in England, and to which it eventually adapted by becoming a tolerated but segregated enclave.

Freud often compared his discovery to that of Copernicus. Althusser has recently defined the nature of his revolution: 'It was not in vain that Freud sometimes compared the critical impact of his discoveries with the upheaval of the Copernican revolution. Since Copernicus, we know that the earth is not the centre of the universe. Since Marx, we

know that the human subject, the economic, political or philosophical ego is not the centre of history—we even know, against the Enlightenment and against Hegel, that history has no centre, but possesses a structure without a centre. . . . Freud has shown us in his turn that the real subject, the individual in his singular essence, does not have the form of an I centred on the 'ego', 'consciousness' or 'existence'—that the human subject is decentred, constituted by a structure which itself has no centre. . . .⁷¹ The implications of this overthrow for the social sciences were and are vast. There is nothing surprising in the fact that it has decisively affected sociology (Parsons), anthropology (Levi-Strauss), philosophy (Althusser), or aesthetics (Adorno) on the European continent and in the United States. English culture, however, has—uniquely—resisted any serious impingement. The significance of this blankness may be assessed by one critical area. The school of linguistic analysis, in England, has been defined by the ambition to align philosophic truth on the rules of ordinary language—ultimate arbiter of the very possibility of social communication. The profoundly ahistorical conception enshrined in the very notion of a stable 'ordinary language' has already been discussed. Linguistic philosophy may be defined as a flight from the emergence of new concepts. It so happens, however, that psychoanalysis is perhaps the most dramatic example in the century of a conceptual revolution which radically overthrows the rules of everyday discourse. The dethronement of the cogito is the end of the grammatical sovereignty of the first person. The emergence of the unconscious as a central concept produces a 'language' in flagrant contradiction with the ego-centred syntax of everyday speech. 'I' is no longer I in the opaque, metonymic double-entendre of Freud's patients, their roles governed by a script that escapes them. No appeal to the conventions of drawing-room conversation can controvert the parapraxes of the couch. The unconscious is not fittable into the language of a colloquial cogito—the quotidian speech to which we have been trained since childhood. Taken seriously, psychoanalysis strikes at the very basis of linguistic philosophy.⁷²

What has been the reaction of English philosophers to it? By and large, they have repressed all consciousness of it. None have confronted psychoanalysis as a central issue for the operational assumptions of their philosophy. A few have tried to deal with it as an anomaly or special

⁷¹ 'Freud et Lacan', *La Nouvelle Critique* 161–162, December–January 1964–5, p. 107.

⁷² Equally it undermines the possibility of certain forms of literature. The novel has declined as a coherent genre, not—as is often alleged—because it was the product of the rising bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century and could not survive it. The true reason is that it has disappeared into the abyss between everyday language and the technical discourses inaugurated by Marx and Freud. The sum of objective knowledge within the specialized codes of the human sciences has decisively contradicted and surpassed the normal assumptions behind exoteric speech. The result is that a novelist, after Marx and Freud, has either to simulate an arcadian innocence or transfer elements of their discourse immediately into his work. Hence the now entrenched bifurcation between pseudo-traditional and experimental novels. Both are doomed as genres (which does not exclude individual successes). The ingenueness of the former is always bad faith; the past will never be recreated. The opposite solution—the inclusion of frontier concepts from Freud or Marx within the novel—has no viable outcome either. Ideas cannot be transposed into art without mediation. The missing mediation is—precisely, ordinary language. As long as this is untransformed at base, these concepts remain 'technical' and 'esoteric'. They run against the



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instance. Austin, in *A Plea for Excuses*, it will be remembered, asserted that: 'Our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations.'⁷³ But he later admitted two special 'source-books'—law and psychology—whose concepts might be additional to those of ordinary language. His formulation of the problem is, in fact, particularly clear: 'Some varieties of behaviour, some ways of acting or explanations of the doing of actions, are here noticed and classified which have not been observed or named by ordinary men and hallowed by ordinary language, though perhaps they often might have been so if they had been of more practical importance. There is real danger in contempt for the 'jargon' of psychology, at least when it sets out to supplement, and at least sometimes when it sets out to supplant, the language of ordinary life.'⁷⁴

Austin illustrates his comment with the technical concepts of 'compulsion' and 'displacement', for which he admits there are no equivalent adverbial expressions in colloquial speech. How, then, is the ideology saved? The answer is, by means of the simple device of proclaiming this class of phenomena of no 'practical' importance. Ordinary language 'embodies the inherited experience and acumen of many generations of men. But then, that acumen has been concentrated primarily upon the practical business of life. . . Compulsive behaviour, like displacement behaviour, is not in general going to be of great importance.'⁷⁵ The candour of such philistinism is almost admirable. No attempt is made at an intellectual argument: the mere invocation of the 'practical business of life' (the cramped routines of any *bien-pensant* bourgeois) is enough to dispatch the problem. Freud's concepts explicitly capture normal and abnormal behaviour in their contradictory unity (neuroses are the obverse of perversions): they represent a general theory of the unconscious, not a pathology of special cases. Quite apart from this, however, what is evident is the renunciation of any attempt to *relate* the concepts of ordinary language to those of 'psychology' (when does the latter not merely 'supplement' but 'supplant' the other? ie—to what extent is the latter a radical critique of the former?). The structural

grain of spontaneous speech. Hence they are strictly *unsuitable* for the artist. If they are imported into the novel, they crush it: there have been no successful psychoanalytic tales. The novelist can only forge his art from the material of ordinary language. If there is a radical discordance between this and objective knowledge of man and society, the novel ceases. It has no ground between the naïve and the arcane. The gap will only be closed by the reintegration of revolutionary ideas into unreflective linguistic practice, which would make possible a coherent novel once again. Such a change, of course, presupposes a changed society. The point here is that the problem from which linguistic philosophy is in constant flight is solidly and visibly installed across the destiny of literature: the *birth of new concepts*.

⁷³ Feysabend has commented aptly on this notion: 'The firmness, the solidity, the regularity of usages are a function of the firmness of the beliefs held as well as of the needs that these beliefs satisfy: what is regarded linguistically as the 'firm ground of language' and is thus opposed to all speculation is usually that part of one's language that is closest to the most basic ideology of the time and expresses it most adequately. That part will then be regarded as being of great practical importance.' 'Problems of Empiricism', p. 188, in *Beyond the Edge of Certainty*, ed. Robert Colodny, USA 1965.

⁷⁴ *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1956–57, p. 15.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 11 and 30.

relations between the two are replaced by a mindless summation of different 'sources'.

Wittgenstein's pupil Wisdom has assayed another type of solution. Here the concepts of psychoanalysis are integrated wholesale into the philosophy of ordinary language, despite their incompatibility with it, by the ingenious device of dubbing them 'paradox' and then asserting that paradox is a special but legal language-game.⁷⁶ This latitudinarian position—both use and misuse of language are significant—has been devastatingly criticized by Gellner. It represents the classic antinomy of this empiricism, where it becomes an all-purpose permissiveness, thereby cancelling itself. Another approach to the problem has been tried by Hampshire. His Ernest Jones lecture of 1962 is avowedly concerned to build 'the shortest possible bridge' between everyday language and psychoanalysis.⁷⁷ For this purpose, Hampshire selects the concept of memory, and argues that psychoanalysis posits a total memory, the greater portion of which becomes unconscious and thereafter generates repressed motives and purposes. No *new* concepts are therefore needed: the existing notion of memory merely needs to be 'extended'. What is striking here is the open and *a priori* assumption that the task of the philosopher is to provide the easiest possible reconciliation of new concepts with common-sense. It is this extraneous goal which determines the analysis of psychoanalytic theory, not the internal necessity of the object. Banalization becomes the public vocation of philosophy. Hampshire's text is in many respects an astonishing document. He actually says: 'It would be an intellectual disaster if theoretical discussion of psychoanalysis were to be confined to clinical contexts, and if at this stage the philosophy of mind went on its way unheeding.'⁷⁸ Fifty years after the advent of Freud, an English philosopher suddenly discovers that it would be an 'intellectual disaster' if his work 'were' to be forgotten by philosophy! What retrospective description is possible, then, for the intervening half century, since the maunderings of Moore in *Principia Ethica*? Hampshire solemnly adds: 'The substitution of a scheme of explanation depending on an extended concept of memory for explanation by causal laws will not be fully understood and evaluated by philosophers for many years.'⁷⁹ The tranquil ignorance of English philosophy is thus assured an indefinite respite. These avowals, by the most liberal ornament of the school, are a suitable epitaph for it. They accurately define the fate of psychoanalysis, and the character of philosophy, in Britain.

14. Anthropology

An interim summary of this rapid survey is now possible. Throughout this desolate panorama, the very notion of the totality is banned. The various traditional disciplines discussed cluster about an absent centre—what should have been the emergence of a classical sociology or a

⁷⁶ 'Philosophy, Metaphysics and Psychoanalysis', in *Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, Oxford 1957.

⁷⁷ 'Disposition and Memory', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, January–February 1962.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

national Marxism. Lacking this centre, they form a vicious circle of self-reproducing fragmentation and limitation. The record of mediocrity has been overwhelming. When neither society nor man are anywhere put in question, culture stops. In England, it has gradually slowed towards zero point. But the notion of totality can never be completely banished from an advanced industrial society. If it is suppressed in its natural loci, it will inevitably be displaced into abnormal or paradoxical sectors. So it has been in Britain.

It has been seen how modern British society was distinguished by its failure to produce any classical sociology. It is now time to consider the bizarre obverse of this phenomenon. For the same society produced a brilliant and flourishing anthropology. It is true that the decisive 'founder' of this anthropology was yet again an expatriate: Bronislaw Malinowski, a Polish aristocrat from the Galician *szlachta*. ('Rivers is the Rider-Haggard of anthropology: I shall be its Conrad,' he said.) But his contemporaries and pupils were to constitute one of the strongest and most influential schools in any Western country. Radcliffe-Brown, Evans-Pritchard, Fortes, Firth and Leach all won world-wide reputations. Their distinction throws into yet greater relief the collective anonymity of British sociology. This strange contrast is an evident indication of a major problem, which demands an explanation. Yet it has by and large passed unnoticed. The career of Durkheim, who was the most powerful foreign source of inspiration for British anthropology in its formative decades, serves as a reminder of how anomalous the British situation was. Durkheim's work was equally and inseparably 'sociological' (*Suicide*) and 'anthropological' (*Elementary Forms of Religious Life*): the division did not exist for him. Why did it exist, as a virtually absolute datum, in England?

The answer is to be found, not in the aims and methods of the two disciplines, but in their objects. British culture never produced a classical sociology largely because British society was never challenged as a whole from within: the dominant class and its intellectuals consequently had no interest in forging a theory of its total structure; for it would necessarily have been an 'answer' to a question which to their ideological advantage remained unposed. *Omnia determinatio est negatio*—the very demarcation of a social totality places it under the sign of contingency. The British bourgeoisie had learnt to fear the meaning of 'general ideas' during the French Revolution: after Burke, it never forgot the lesson. Hegemony at home demanded a moratorium on them. By the end of the 19th century, however, this class was master of a third of the world. English anthropology was born of this disjuncture. British imperial society exported its totalizations, onto its subject peoples. There, and there only, it could afford scientific study of the social whole. 'Primitive' societies became the surrogate object of the theory proscribed at home. British anthropology developed unabashedly in the wake of British imperialism. Colonial administration had an inherent need of cogent, objective information on the peoples over which it ruled. The miniature scale of primitive societies, moreover, made them exceptionally propitious for macro-analysis; as Sartre once commented, they form 'natural' significant totalities. British anthropology was thus able both to assist British imperialism, and to develop

a genuine theory—something sociology in Britain was never able to do. The class core of this contrast is not an arbitrary construction. The least suspect of sources has innocently admitted it. Macrae, symbol of British sociological orthodoxy ('a rather splendid amateurism'), writes: 'British social anthropology has drawn on the same intellectual capital as sociology proper, and its success, *useful to colonial administration and dangerous to no domestic prejudice*, shows at what a high rate of interest that capital can be made to pay. . . . The subject . . . unlike sociology, has prestige. It is associated with colonial administration—traditionally a career for a gentleman, and entrance into the profession and acceptance by it confers high status in Britain.'⁸⁰ Useful to colonial administration and dangerous to no domestic prejudice—the formula is brief and exact. These were the twin conditions of existence of British anthropology, as it developed.

The scholars themselves, of course, were nearly always liberal within the paternalist framework of their vocation. But the sensibility produced by it is graphically indicated by Evans-Pritchard, whose classic study of the Nuer contains this calm aside, after a lengthy and often lyrical account of Nuer life: 'In 1920 large-scale military operations, including bombing and machine-gunning of camps, were conducted against the Eastern Jikany and caused much loss of life and destruction of property. There were further patrols from time to time, but the Nuer remained unsubdued. . . . From 1928 to 1930 prolonged operations were conducted against the whole of the disturbed area and marked the end of serious fighting between the Nuer and the Government. Conquest was a severe blow to the Nuer. . . .'⁸¹ Needless to say, the passing reference to this brutal war is completely dissociated from the analysis of Nuer society itself. Later developments modified the role of outright violence. But the context of anthropological work had not changed greatly twenty years later, when a volume of tributes to Radcliffe-Brown, edited by Fortes, could include the following contribution on the uses of anthropology to more 'modern' notions of imperial control: 'It is only after months or years of administration, and sometimes not even then, that a Military Government officer or colonial administrator learns the virtues of 'opposition face'. By this is meant that the native leader or appointed official must be allowed some leeway to oppose the occupying administration for the purposes of his public, in order that he may the more successfully carry through the main and essential necessities of government for the maintenance of law and order. This is simply good political horse sense. One good reason for giving native leaders some sense of responsibility (not necessarily for policies but rather for methods and procedures of carrying them out) is to avoid too much paternalism. The latter is stultifying and may lead to complete lack of co-operation on the part of the people. A reasonably alert and satisfied population is amenable in terms of labour procurement and any other problem of administration requiring the co-operation of the people.'⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ideology and Society: Papers in sociology and politics*, London 1961, pp. 36 and 9 (my italics).

⁸¹ *The Nuer*, Oxford 1940, p. 131.

⁸² *Social Structures: Essays Presented to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown*, ed. Meyer Fortes, Oxford 1949: 'American Military Government', John Embree, p. 220.

This, then, was the practical historical setting of the growth of imperial anthropology. What were its theoretical achievements? The formidable research carried out by two generations of scholars was integrated under the canons of functionalism. Radcliffe-Brown provided the most coherent theoretical explanation of this doctrine, but was himself more influential in the USA than in Britain. It was the original author of the notion, Malinowski, who formed a generation of English anthropologists. The basic idea of functionalism was that the diverse parts of society—economy, polity, kinship or religion—form a consistent whole, unified by the interconnecting functions of each. Functionalism represented the notion of an immediate and simple totality. As such, it was an enormous advance over the atomized empiricism of domestic British thought. It naturally produced a social science of incomparably greater force and insight: to this day, British anthropology towers above its stunted sibling. The limitations of functionalism, however, became increasingly evident with time. Malinowski's founding version of it was a variety of psychologism—the recurring motif discernible throughout this cultural pattern. The function of the different institutions which made up a society was to serve the psychological needs of the population, which Malinowski believed were innate. Parsons has written the critique of this theory; it did not survive Malinowski.⁸³ But the deeper limit of functionalism persisted. It was a totalization without contradictions. Having posited the compact integration of social institutions, it was by definition incapable of dealing with structural antagonisms. Where conflicts were considered at all, they were treated as merely conducive to ultimate order (Gluckmann). Hence the progressive loss of impetus once the pioneering work of Malinowski's pupils was done. No renewal was possible within this framework, which represented the outer-limit of a totalizing theory whose vector was a stable British imperialism.

The Second World War provoked the crisis of this imperial system. The emergence of new tendencies within British anthropology coincides with this crisis. The material for the work which represented a new departure was gathered while its author was an officer in the Burmese campaign. Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* was explicitly an attack on the equilibria assumptions of classic British functionalism. The whole of his analysis of Kachin society is focussed on the insurmountable contradictions of its political system, which perpetually veered from a hierarchical to an egalitarian pole, without ever achieving a stabilization at either: the hierarchical model necessarily cancelling kin relations and thereby producing revolt, and the egalitarian model necessarily fostering privileged lineages and thereby reproducing hierarchy. It was no accident that Leach invoked Pareto as his inspiration. In effect, the contradiction with which he was concerned was a cyclical one—the exact type which formed the thematic pre-occupation of classical sociology. The criticisms that may be made of it are the same; Leach himself, however, supplies a potential corrective, when he comments on a significant asymmetry in the contradiction—

⁸³ *Man and Culture*, ed. Raymond Firth, London 1957: 'Malinowski and the Theory of Social Systems', Talcott Parsons.

the precondition of the hierarchical model is the generation of a reasonable economic surplus. It was consistent with its general advance of theoretical level that Leach's study firmly integrated the imperial administration *into* the anthropological analysis itself, showing how British colonial ideology had insisted that there was only 'one' model of Kachin society—the hierarchical, one—because colonial practice repressed the other as subversive, while deliberately intensifying the autocratic aspects of the former, as the mediate instrument of its control (indirect rule). Here political awareness was the condition of scientific progress.

Leach's subsequent development confirmed this radical start. He was the first British anthropologist to understand the importance of the work of Levi-Strauss, and to use it aggressively to criticize the methodological procedures of the discipline as a whole (*Rethinking Anthropology*). Most recently, he has been the first to produce an exemplary structural analysis of myth. *The Legitimacy of Solomon*, his study of the Old Testament, is perhaps the most exciting intellectual event of the last few years here. Needless to say, it is virtually unknown and was published abroad.⁸⁴ In it, Leach once again centres his whole analysis on an insuperable contradiction—the need for the Jews in Palestine to claim endogamy for the purposes of religious unity, while practicing exogamy for the purposes of political alliances. In a superb demonstration, he shows that the Old Testament is the mythical drama whereby this contradiction is transformed into a maze of binary oppositions and formally resolved there. With this, Leach re-establishes the concept of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions. Both in object and method, his analysis is literally an exercise in iconoclasm. The displacement which was at the origin of British anthropology, freeing it from the general rules of the national culture, has thus born fruit to this day. Both traditional functionalism and the structuralism of Leach's later work are anomalies for English empiricism. Anthropology has formed a deviant sector within English culture, because its application was outside it. The exception here is a corollary of the rule.

15. Literary Criticism

Suppressed and denied in every other sector of thought, the second, displaced home of the totality became literary criticism. Here, no expatriate influence ever became dominant. Leavis commanded his subject, within his own generation. With him, English literary criticism conceived the ambition to become the vaulting centre of 'humane studies and of the university'. English was 'the chief of the humanities'.⁸⁵ This claim was unique to England: no other country has ever produced a critical discipline with these pretensions. They should be seen, not as a reflection of megalomania on the part of Leavis, but as a symptom of the objective vacuum at the centre of the culture. Driven out of any obvious habitats, the notion of the totality found refuge in the least expected of studies. The peculiar status of literary criticism, as conceived by Leavis and his pupils, is itself evidence of the global anomaly

⁸⁴ *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 1966, No. 7.

⁸⁵ *Education and the University*, London 1943, p. 33.

of the system. A preliminary definition would be to say that when philosophy became 'technical', a displacement occurred and literary criticism became 'ethical'. The two thereafter stood in a relation of structural complementarity. English philosophy, with Wittgenstein, abandoned ethics and metaphysics for the neutral investigation of language. English criticism, with Leavis, assumed the responsibility of moral judgment and metaphysical assertion. A comparison may be relevant here: France has traditionally shown the opposite relationship—a highly technical, hermeneutic criticism (Poulet and Richard) and an ontological and moral philosophy (Sartre). This distribution is the classical one in the West.

Leavis's personal critical achievement, of course, was extraordinary. The rigour and intelligence of his discriminations established entirely new standards: *Revaluations* and *The Great Tradition* alone reconstructed the very order of English poetry and the novel. There is no need here to demonstrate this: the works speak for themselves. As a critic, Leavis is a landmark that has yet to be surpassed.

The paradox of this great critic is that his whole oeuvre rested on a metaphysic which he could never expound or defend. Empiricism here found its strangest expression. Leavis, whose work transcended the rut of English philistinism so decisively (and was so hated for it), used its most extreme form to evade open debate of his ideas. His was a metaphysic which refused to justify itself. Wellek, in his famous letter to Leavis in 1937, wrote: 'I could wish that you had stated your assumptions more explicitly and defended them more systematically.' Declaring that he shared most of these assumptions, he went on: 'But I would have misgivings in pronouncing them without elaborating a specific defence or a theory in their defence. . . . I would ask you to defend this position more abstractly and to become conscious that large ethical, philosophical and, of course, ultimately also aesthetic choices are involved.'⁶⁶ Leavis's reply is a deliberate refusal: 'Ideally, I ought perhaps to be able to complete the work with a theoretical statement'—but in practice, he declined to do so.⁶⁷ The critic does not judge by an external philosophical norm, he achieves a complete internal possession of a work and then fits it into his assessment of other works. 'We were empirical and opportunist in spirit', he later wrote.⁶⁸ Wellek had pointed out the constancy with which certain key formulations and epithets—'healthy', 'vital', 'plain vulgar living', 'actual' and others—recurred in Leavis's writings, forming the systematic substructure of his works. The most important, and notorious, of these was the idea of 'life' which was central to Leavis's thought. His book on Lawrence, his most important intellectual statement, exemplifies with particular clarity the logical paradox of an insistent metaphysical vocabulary combined with a positivist methodology. *The Daughters of the Vicar*, I say, is profoundly representative of Lawrence, and class-distinctions enter as a major element into its theme. . . . The part they play in the

⁶⁶ 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy', Rene Wellek, *Scrutiny*, March 1937, p. 376.

⁶⁷ 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy—A Reply', F. R. Leavis, *Scrutiny*, June 1937, p. 62.

⁶⁸ *Scrutiny: A Retrospect*, p. 4, Vol. XX, Cambridge 1963.

given tale is a sinister one, and the theme is their defeat—the triumph over them of life. It is one of the difficulties of criticism that the critic has to use such phrases as that last. It is one of the advantages of having such a creative achievement as *The Daughters of the Vicar* to deal with that the phrase gets its force in the tale, the movement and sum of which define 'life' in the only way in which it *can* be defined for the purposes of the critic: he has the tale—its developing significance and the concrete particulars of its organization—to point to.⁸⁹ The circularity of the argument is complete. Leavis repeats the same procedure again and again: 'We are made to judge that she has chosen life. The sense in which she has done so it takes the tale to define, and in defining it the tale justifies that way of describing her decision.'⁹⁰

How did Leavis justify this logical circle? The answer is that Leavis's criticism did contain a very specific epistemology, which in its turn implied a particular interpretation of history. When challenged for the rationale of his critical statements, Leavis always replied that they did not properly speaking have an affirmative but *an interrogative form*. The latent form of all literary criticism was: 'This is so, is it not?' Thus Leavis wrote that his method in *Revaluations* was to get his readers 'to agree (with, no doubt, critical qualifications) that the map, the essential order of English poetry seen as a whole did, when they interrogated their experience, look like that to them also.'⁹¹ The formal circularity of the criticism of a text was the elliptical sign of a substantive exchange between its readers.

The central idea of this epistemology—the interrogative statement—demands one crucial precondition: a shared, stable system of beliefs and values. Without this, no loyal exchange and report is possible. If the basic formation and outlook of readers diverges, their experience will be incommensurable. Leavis's whole method presupposes, in fact, a morally and culturally unified audience. In its absence, his epistemology disintegrates. Hence, doubtless, the enormous nostalgia for the 'organic community' of the past which pervades his work. The illusory nature of this notion—its mythic character—has been often criticized: correctly. But its function within his work has not been properly understood. It is not a whimsical ideal, but a validating reference for the actual operation of the criticism. For nothing was less obvious or to be taken for granted in Leavis's day than a stable, shared system of beliefs. Indeed, his very epistemology is the explanation of Leavis's own famous inability to understand or sympathize with *either* avant-garde or foreign literature (with a very few exceptions, such as Tolstoy). His complete incomprehension was built into his method: it should not merely be attributed to arbitrary traits of his personality. For once time (avant garde) and place (country) changed, the cultural basis for a shared interrogation collapsed. Blank prejudice and bafflement were the predictable products of his disorientation before them.

Leavis's epistemology was necessarily accompanied by a philosophy of history. The organic community of the past, when there was no divi

⁸⁹ D. H. Lawrence: *Novelist*, London 1955, pp. 75–76.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁹¹ 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy—A Reply', p. 62.

sion between popular and sophisticated culture, died with the Augustan age: Bunyan was among its last witnesses. Thereafter, history for Leavis traced a gradual decline. The industrial revolution finally swamped the old rural culture. But it did not initially undermine the existence of a cultivated and elite minority, the creators of literary culture. The nineteenth century produced such romantic poets as Keats or Coleridge, and the great tradition of the English novel—Eliot, Conrad and James. With the twentieth century, however, the inexorable tide of industrialism began to invade the very precincts of humane culture itself. Leavis saw the new media of communication—newspapers, magazines, radio, cinema and television—as the menacing apogee of commercialism and industrial civilization. They threatened to obliterate every critical standard, on which the existence of culture depended, in a new barbarism. The duty of the literary critic was to fight uncompromisingly and unceasingly against any dilution or degeneration of these standards. Defying every convention of the British intelligentsia, Leavis lent a violent zeal and fury to this role.

The pages of *Scrutiny* are pervaded by an immense pessimism: a sense of inexorable cultural atrophy, and of a dwindling minority aware of it. This is the memorable and unifying theme of the review. Article after article laments an increasing deturpation of literary standards and a triumph of the meretricious. Leavis became obsessed with the commercialism of the new media and the corruption of the metropolitan world of letters. His commination of them became more strident with every year. *Scrutiny* never paused in its campaign against them. But this was only one of its two central ideological concerns. The other was anti-Marxism. Leavis is the only intellectual in this survey to have been deeply affected by Marxism. This will appear a paradoxical statement to those who only know his latter-day reputation. But the fact is that *Scrutiny* was born in close relation to Marxism—its predecessor, *The Calendar of Letters*, was edited by a Communist—and it developed in a permanent tension with it thereafter. Leavis wrote in its first year: 'I agree with the Marxist to the extent of believing some form of economic communism to be inevitable and desirable.'⁹² Antagonism rapidly grew after this, when the metropolitan literary world was suddenly seized with radicalism; Marxism became fashionable among young writers, although many of them were only remotely acquainted with it. This wave has already been discussed. The point here is that it became the intellectual pole against which *Scrutiny* defined itself. Leavis and his colleagues constantly attacked the illiteracy and shallowness of this vulgar leftism. In doing so, they had no difficulty in establishing their superiority over it: the intellectual disparity between a Leavis and an Auden was, after all, self-evident. By the end of the decade, modish literary leftism had virtually disappeared. In *Scrutiny*, Leavis wrote its obituary: 'Marxist the decade certainly was. It was also, in literature, a very barren decade.'⁹³

The rout of this opponent did not alleviate Leavis's general cultural diagnosis. If anything, his forebodings deepened after the Second

⁹² *Scrutiny*, March 1933.

⁹³ 'Retrospect of a Decade', *Scrutiny*, June 1940.

World War. Leavis saw himself as the spokesman of traditional humane values, a critic determined to safeguard the great heritage of English literary culture and the classical English university. Yet he himself was rejected by the very institutions which he exalted. Cambridge, model of his idea of a university, rejected and ignored him. Isolated in this hostile environment, *Scrutiny* finally drifted to a halt in the fifties. The retrospect that Leavis wrote ten years later is an extraordinary document. In it, Leavis defines his relations both to Marxism and to Cambridge. 'We were anti-Marxist—necessarily so (we thought); an intelligent, that is a real, interest in literature implied a conception of it very different from any that a Marxist could expound and explain. Literature—what we knew as literature and had studied for the English Tripos—mattered; it mattered crucially to civilization—of that we were sure. It mattered because it represented a human reality, an autonomy of the human spirit, for which economic determinism and reductive interpretation in terms of the class war left no room. Marxist fashion gave up the doctrinal challenge. But Marxism was a characteristic product of our 'capitalist' civilization, and the economic determinism we were committed to refuting practically was that which might seem to have been demonstrated by the movement and process of this. The dialectic against which we had to vindicate literature and humane culture was that of the external or material civilization we lived in. 'External' and 'material' here need not be defined: they convey well enough the insistence that our total civilization is a very complex thing, with a kind of complexity to which Marxist categories are not adequate.

Cambridge, then, figured for us civilization's anti-Marxist recognition of its own nature and needs—recognition of that, the essential, which Marxist wisdom discredited, and the external and material drive of civilization threatened, undocrinally, to eliminate. It was our strength to be, in our consciousness of our effort, and actually, in the paradoxical and ironical way I have to record, representatives of that Cambridge. We *were*, in fact, that Cambridge; we felt it, and had more and more reason to feel it, and our confidence and courage came from that. . . Only at Cambridge could the idea of *Scrutiny* have taken shape, become a formidable life and maintained the continuous living force that made it hated and effective. It was (to deepen the emphasis) a product, the triumphant justifying achievement, of the English Tripos. I express and intend to encourage, no simple parochial enthusiasm or loyalty in dwelling on these truths. I had better, in fact, add at once the further testimony that *Scrutiny* started, established itself and survived in spite of Cambridge."⁴

This astonishing passage contains the core of Leavis's intellectual position: it is a precise, binary exposition of its structure. Marxism is the 'doctrinal challenge'. It is rejected because it partakes of the very society which it claims to condemn: it is materialist and therefore 'characteristic product of capitalist civilization'. Against it, Leavis proclaims 'literature and humane culture' which are essential to 'civilization', but which are factually negated by its 'external and material drive'. The essence of civilization becomes inner and spiritual. It

⁴ *Scrutiny: A Retrospect*, p. 4.

represented supremely by Cambridge, and Cambridge is represented supremely—indeed coincided with—*Scrutiny*. 'We were Cambridge'. But the actual Cambridge—inner and spiritual essence of civilization—negated *Scrutiny*, which only survived 'in spite of Cambridge'. Reality becomes completely volatilized in this multiple regression towards the ideal. The logical structure of the argument reveals the intolerable strain that Leavis's concrete experience imposed on his preconceptions. It becomes a vertiginous spiral of antinomies, in which the flight from one merely produces another which in turn reproduces another. Marxism seems to be a critique of capitalist civilization; in fact it is merely an exemplification of it. This civilization seems to confirm economic determinism; in fact, only its external and material drive does, not its spiritual essence. The inner spirit of civilization seems to be exemplified in Cambridge, and Cambridge in *Scrutiny*; in fact Cambridge systematically rejected *Scrutiny*, which was created against it.

What was the meaning of this desperate and impossible syllogism? It was, obviously, not a mere error. It was the manifest sign of genuine impasse in Leavis's thought. Alone of the thinkers in this survey, he was acutely aware that something had gone wrong in British culture. Indeed, this idea obsessed him. *Scrutiny* is the record of a 'barren decade.' But he was unable to explain the decline he denounced. The fate of culture was attributed to the drive of 'mass' civilization and its corrupt accompaniment by modern literati. Against these enemies, Leavis posed older ideals—Cambridge: but Cambridge itself was complicit with them. Hence the fixation on trivial targets which gradually took such disproportionate space in his work—the British Council, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Bloomsbury, the fashionable literary world and so on. They were the aberrant symptoms of his failure to locate the true causes of the decline. Intellectually blocked, his insight became a displaced acrimony and monomania. Leavis was correctly indicating a cultural landscape of rank mediocrity and conformity. But this was not the inevitable product of industrial civilization, nor even of capitalism as a generic form of society. It had its intelligible origins in the specific history of English social structure and the class which dominated it. It was no accident that the very sanctum into which Leavis retreated refused him. For the unity of British culture naturally included it: Bloomsbury and Cambridge were not antipodes but twins (Forster, Strachey and Keynes were the proof of it). But Leavis's critical epistemology demanded the postulation of an authentic cultural community somewhere: hence the delirious idealism of his insistence on a meta-Cambridge.

Lacking any sociological formation, registering a decline but unable to provide a theory of it, Leavis was ultimately trapped in the cultural nexus he hated. His empiricism became banally reactionary in old age. Like many thinkers, he survived himself to his detriment. But the importance of his achievements remains. It is no accident that in the fifties, the one serious work of socialist theory in Britain—Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution*—should have emerged from literary criticism, of all disciplines.⁹⁵ This paradox was not a mere quirk: in a culture which

⁹⁵ The influence of Leavis is discernible in its idealism—corrected in much of Williams's later work. Leavis believed that 'to say that the life of a country is determined by its educational ideals is a commonplace.' *Scrutiny*, No. 1, May 1932.

everywhere repressed the notion of totality, and the idea of critical reason, literary criticism represented a refuge. The mystified form they took in Leavis's work, which prevented him ever finding answers to his questions, may be obvious today. But it was from within this tradition that Williams was able to develop a systematic socialist thought, which was a critique of all forms of utilitarianism and fabianism—the political avatars of empiricism in the labour movement. The detour Williams had to make through English literary criticism is the appropriate tribute to it.

16. Summary

The results of this survey may now be briefly summated. The culture of British bourgeois society is organized about an absent centre—a total theory of itself, that should have been either a classical sociology or a national Marxism. The trajectory of English social structure—above all, the non-emergence of a powerful revolutionary movement of the working-class—is the explanation of this arrested development. Two anomalous results followed, the visible index of a vacuum. A White emigration rolled across the flat expanse of English intellectual life, capturing sector after sector, until this traditionally insular culture became dominated by expatriates, of heterogeneous calibre. Simultaneously, the absence of a centre produced a series of structural distortions in the character and connections of the inherited disciplines. Philosophy was restricted to a technical inventory of language. Political theory was thereby cut off from history. History was divorced from the exploration of political ideas. Psychology was counterposed to them. Economics was dissociated from both political theory and history. Aesthetics was reduced to psychology. The congruence of each sector with its neighbour is circular: together they form something like a closed system. The quarantine of psychoanalysis is an example: it was incompatible with this pattern. Suppressed in every obvious sector at home, the idea of the totality was painlessly exported abroad, producing the paradox of an anthropology where there was no sociology. In the general vacuum thus created, literary criticism usurps ethics and insinuates a philosophy of history. It was logical that it should finally be the one sector capable of producing a synthetic socialist theory.

The void at the centre of this culture generated a pseudo-centre—the timeless ego whose metempsychosis in discipline after discipline has been encountered in this survey. The price of missing sociology, let alone Marxism, was the prevalence of psychologism. A culture which lacks the instruments to conceive the social totality inevitably falls back on the nuclear psyche, as First Cause of society and history. This invariant substitute is explicit in Malinowski, Namier, Eysenck and Gombrich. It has a logical consequence. Time exists only as intermitence (Keynes), decline (Leavis) or oblivion (Wittgenstein). Ultimately (Namier, Leavis or Gombrich), the twentieth century itself becomes the impossible object. The era of revolutions is, necessarily, unthinkable.

The consequences of this total constellation for the Left need no emphasis. The chloroforming effect of such cultural configuration, its silent and constant underpinning of the social status quo, are deadly

British culture, as it is now constituted, is a deeply damaging and stifling force, operating against the growth of any revolutionary Left. It quite literally deprives the Left of any source of concepts and categories with which to analyze its own society, and thereby attain a fundamental precondition for changing it. History has tied this knot; only history will ultimately undo it. A revolutionary culture is not for tomorrow. But a revolutionary practice within culture is possible and necessary today. The student struggle is its initial form.

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BODLEY HEAD

Scanner—I

The three articles below are descriptions and analyses of recent student struggles in England by militants active in them. In each case, the issues around which the action centred and the pattern of struggle that emerged are different, and the generalizations drawn from their experience differ too. This is only to be expected. There can as yet be no general line on a strategy for revolutionary student action in the UK. This can only be developed by drawing together student experience by action at a national level; this demands a central organization of revolutionary student militants. NLR therefore welcomes the foundation of a Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation in London this June.

Hull

Tom Fawthrop

On Saturday, June 8th, after a ten day campaign unique in the history of the University of Hull, the overwhelming majority of students voted at a Union general meeting to occupy the administration buildings. For once, Union policy was promptly implemented; by Saturday night the power-centre of the University had been taken over; a sign on the entrance, 'Under New Management', announced this new fact of life.

Yet only a few weeks before the event, few students at Hull would have imagined student power being demonstrated in Humberside. At that time Hull students seemed to reflect the passive and inert nature of most other students in the country, and the actions of Paris seemed far away.

But suddenly that scene changed dramatically, and more than a thousand students were involved during the campaign. This, of course, was profoundly disturbing for the bureaucrats on all sides, i.e. University administrators and the Students' union. Naturally, bureaucrats fear nothing more than spontaneity—people acting for themselves.

The initial 'sit-in' (May 30th) only lasted a few hours, and after a tactical withdrawal the next stage of the campaign began by setting up commissions responsible to *general meetings of the Union*. These commissions in effect, posed an alternative model of organization to the traditional students' union bureaucracy (of council and executive). During the next ten days 'the campus' at Hull became the centre of continuous debate, discussion and argument—the political character of the student body had been transformed. What was once a corpse, was now a vigorous body. In spite of exams, numbers at general meetings of the Union exceeded 800 and they continually reiterated their support for

the eight demands. But although the demands were reformist in many respects, they soon came to assume some 'revolutionary' implications. The demand for representation became the demand for equal representation—and this in turn became our central demand, and remain union policy even after the sit-in. The main governing board of Hull University is the Senate (composed of 47 members of the academic hierarchy); so we decided to elect 47 student senators who would take their place on senate within one week (after May 31st—General Meeting of Union)—or else we would take direct action.

After 10 days of procrastination by the Senate, and compromise by the students, we finally re-occupied the administration centre on Saturday June 8th. The sit-in lasted five and a half days.

The Eight Student Demands

1. Basic reform of the examination system now, in consultation with students and members of staff in accordance with Union policy.
2. The immediate formulation of staff-student committees on a departmental basis to consider questions of syllabus, assessment and the possibilities of extending teaching techniques.
3. No increase in residence fees, meal or buttery prices except by prior agreement.
4. Stop 'in loco parentis', in line with the Latey Report, i.e., treat students as adults.
5. Democratic student control of the Lawns Centre Block—no removal of cooking facilities from the Lawn Halls.
6. Direct student representation on Council, Senate and all administrative bodies of the University. The students to have equal executive power.
7. End secret diplomacy throughout the whole system and open accounts and minutes of the University.
8. That the Vice-Chancellor and all members of staff should in circumstances, other than academic, inform or instruct LEA's to withhold student grants, so that there can be no penalization of the individual demonstrating political views.

Clearways Campaign Step by Step

Thursday, May 30th. The Socialist Society expresses solidarity with the French students. Hull students also air grievances and dissatisfaction with this University. A march to administration block and subsequent 'sit-in' takes place, students holding open discussion with the V.C. A first outline of the eight points to be delivered to Senate drawn up. The name May 30th Committee is given to this movement. Hull students for spontaneous and independent organization. In the evening commissions are proposed to clarify the situation and to make information available to students throughout the University.

Friday, May 31st. An unofficial meeting of over 700 students discuss the eight points outlined the previous day and subjects them to formal ratification at the next Union meeting. Commissions are set up to investigate and report on the various demands. The meeting demands

that Senate meet by the following Wednesday to discuss seating our Union Senators at a further meeting on Friday, and 60 Union Senators are elected.

The Long Weekend. The Commissions meet and discuss practical purposes. The Departmental Commission suggests 'immediate formulation of staff-student committees with executive power on a departmental basis, working through student meetings, departmental committees and more personal contact with tutors and supervisors.' The Exam Commission suggests various alternatives to the present examination system including overall assessment, verbal exams, and dissertations. The Lawns Commission outlines several long term proposals including reformation of the Lawns Management Committee to include more student representatives. The Co-ordinating Commissions visit Halls of Residence to explain events and to dispel certain rumours each as 'violence and damage to property'.

Tuesday, June 4th. A general meeting of the Union decides to postpone any militant action until Friday's Union meeting as Senate is unable to meet before Thursday afternoon. 13 of the Union Senators withdraw since at the present time there are only 47 members of the University Senate. A Press Commission is set up to avoid misuse of information and misquoting. The 'Clearway' sign is adopted, implying the slogan: 'No stopping until equal representation!'

Thursday, June 6th. The Senate meets and discusses our eight points and the possibility of seating our representatives at its next meeting. In the evening Union Senators discuss Senate's proposals as soon as they are made known.

Friday, June 7th. An open staff-student meeting in the University Lecture theatre is initiated by sympathetic staff to discuss the student case. So far 23 staff sponsors from 10 departments have lent their support to this meeting.

2.15. A General Union meeting is held to discuss the statement from the Vice-Chancellor on behalf of Senate and to consider any further action. Friday's vote goes against a sit-in.

Saturday, June 8th. The proposals of the members of Senate are rejected. The sit-in recommences. The real occupation of the administration building takes place.

Thursday, June 13th. Sit-in ends after narrow defeat in union meeting.

Lessons of our Struggle

Strategy. Other student confrontations (e.g. L.S.E., Essex), have largely been based on a defensive strategy arising from the victimization of particular students. At Hull the issues were taken to the authorities rather than the other way round, and Clearways Campaign has been based throughout on an *offensive* strategy. This has important implications for developments elsewhere: students do not have to wait for the authorities to provoke the student body.

Politics of the Campaign. Although the Socialist Society played some part in initiating the campaign, after the first day every effort was made to enlist the support of all students within a truly broad-based movement. A clear choice confronted us at Hull: either an ineffective campaign by a minority, or an effective campaign by a majority. The militants opted for the latter, and revolutionary socialists fell in behind the banner of democracy. We chose the real politics of revolutionary democracy as opposed to the sham politics of revolutionary semantics. Every real struggle, every engagement with the power structure is worth a hundred revolutionary slogans.

Role of the Student Union Bureaucracy. In a student union the president is generally the most influential figure—certainly at Hull his role was important (cf. the role of the President at Leicester). While supporting all the eight demands and accepting the *de facto* control of the union by Clearways Campaign (Union facilities, duplicating material etc.), the President played an ambiguous role during the actual course of the campaign for a sit-in, by long and private conversations with the Vice-Chancellor (contrary to the spirit of the movement—‘end secret diplomacy’). In some sense the movement up to the main ‘sit-in’ succeeded in ‘capturing the bureaucracy’ by rendering it relatively impotent. However, once the general meeting of the Union knew the Senate had not met our demands, and the call to implement our promise of direct action was made, the old union structure reasserted itself by attempting to divide the movement. The very clear lesson is that the mass of students should always be wary of this elite, who will nearly always in the end compromise with the University Oligarchy¹, rather than back up union policy with student power.

But the impact of the sit-in would probably have been much less, if the union bureaucracy had not been carried that vital distance to the edge of their own personal abyss, i.e., the demise of their own bureaucratic status and their absorption into the common ranks of all those actually sitting-in. *The issue of secret diplomacy between the students and the university should be viewed as the crucial factor in any similar confrontation.*

The Demands. The two vital aspects of our demands were:

1. The synthesis which related all the demands together under the banner of a ‘Democratic University’
2. The fact that each individual demand was felt as a very real grievance by large numbers of students.

The first factor is, of course, the essential basis for an offensive strategy if the student body is to hold the initiative. In this way the Hull campaign was never a single-issue campaign, and the demand for student power (equal executive representation on all decision-making bodies) was always related to the other seven demands. In practice this meant that student power was not reduced to an abstract slogan, but became the description of a concrete programme for the democratization of the university. It should also be stressed that the democratic university

¹ Several members of the union executive supported the sit-in; every movement should encourage and cater for defections from the establishment.

meant to Hull students not just democracy for the students, but for the lecturing staff as well. Indeed, why have professorships at all? The staff hierarchy is nothing less than a structure of academic status and snobbery.

One of the explicit demands concerned the wages of porters in the union, but we affirmed support for representation of maintenance staff, catering staff, cleaners and all other workers at the university on those committees that affected their working conditions.

These demands were treated as necessary reforms by the majority of students, although the number of students whose perspective encompassed a thorough-going transformation of our institutions, fluctuated considerably during the course of grand debates between 500 to a 1,000².

Role of the Lecturing Staff. The number of lecturers that signed our 'sit-in' visitors book totalled 49³. Most of these could be described as sympathizers, with about a dozen providing active support. This group of solid supporters suffered incredible abuse at staff meetings, and were generally referred to as the 'traitors', supporting 'the other side'. Their support proved invaluable, and our experience suggests that the ultimate success of such campaigns may often be assisted by splits and divisions among the staff, as the latter are confronted with the contradiction between the real aims of teaching and education, and their complicity in the prostitution of learning for the purpose of perpetuating the academic hierarchy, and the goals of a technological capitalist society.

The Performance of the Vice-Chancellor. The way in which the mass of students views the Principal or Vice-Chancellor is of great importance. Certain students will often tend to regard him in terms of a 'father-figure', a person there to help, explain and advise. This paternalistic role was played with great dexterity by Brynmor Jones at Hull, and it was largely his intervention during the final meeting that succeeded in swaying the students against the sit-in.⁴

When it came to the 'crunch' rather more students blindly trusted the V.C. and had faith in his assurances than the rest—and next day the sit-in came to an end.

Containment of Student Unrest. The main tactic adopted by the authorities throughout was that of procrastination. This is their trump card. They are unable to grasp the nature of a mass movement, and expect and wait for the enthusiasm to fade, and the spontaneity to be suffocated by their own machinery of negotiations.

² Total number of students is 3,550.

³ Total number of staff 450.

⁴ Wednesday, June 12th (4th day of the sit-in) General Meeting of Union took place with 1,600 students present. By a majority of about 180 votes, the amendment to continue the sit-in was lost.

This is a very real danger only if the mass of students became showered with technicalities, and the movement loses touch with its original ends. Certainly at Hull, the Senate have made an ingenious attempt to do just this—to sidetrack us from our original intent. Instead of meeting our demands, they have come out with proposals for parallel structures throughout the university, on which students would have equal representation. However, these would only be 'dummy committees', from which a certain number of students would be allowed to sit on the real committees, for the duration of the minutes of the parallel committee (this proposal applies to all levels—departmental, faculty and Senate).

This proposal may well be regarded as a prototype for the containment of student unrest. It is ingenious in that it presents the illusion of power, without giving away any of its reality.

The proposals are nothing but a sophisticated exercise in the practice of deceit. They represent a systematic attempt to undermine the movement for real power, to emasculate our demands, and to isolate the militant from the mass of students. Our task is to communicate that beneath the complexities of these apparently generous proposals, lies a cynical fraud. Our opponents are too clever to say no to our demands. They offer neither rejection nor acceptance but instead offer to discuss alternative proposals—and to discuss at length. The pedagogic gerontocracy is adept at playing for time—students must be aware of this.

We are Impertinent. This became our slogan for challenging authority. In spite of all the sell-outs, the compromises, the betrayals and the Vice-Chancellor, 'at the end of the day' (the 4th day of the sit-in) 63 students still voted to continue the sit-in. It was not enough to win the motion, but it was enough to produce a distinctly uncomfortable feeling deep down inside these irresponsible individuals who form together in the University, an *unrepresentative minority* called Senate (government not by election but by appointment).

In this sense the sit-in can be regarded as a triumph, in that the university will never be the same again. Our commissions continue to operate and departmental activity is springing up everywhere. The concept of the 'Free University' has been born in Hull, and 500 people who participated in the 'sit-in' have been through a fantastic experience that we will never forget, and that Senate will never understand—the experience of spontaneous activity, impromptu speeches, and living in close co-operation with nearly 400 other people at one time. For the first time we sensed that we belonged to a real community—and our triumph was to succeed in creating it.⁵ Now the campaign continues in the same spirit, as this time we work towards creating not just a partial community, but a total free university as the intellectual bridgehead of a different type of society.

⁵ The Hull struggle has not gone unnoticed in other parts of the globe—on Wednesday, June 12th we received some flattering comments on Peking Radio.

Hornsey Art College in North London has been the scene of the most successful student-power movement yet in Britain. The terms of this success are well-known, thanks to the great publicity the take-over attracted. At the time of writing, the students had occupied the College for six weeks—and the occupation was both complete (i.e. involved every aspect of the institution, not only the teaching areas) and continuous (i.e. 24 hours a day, with a permanently open canteen and a considerable number of students sleeping-in). The movement is running an important exhibition-cum-teach-in at the gallery of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, and has called a National Conference of Art Colleges to extend the revolution and change the whole system of art education from below.

Potentialities of Student Power

The achievements of the Hornsey *comp* are remarkable, by any standards. Seen from inside, the changes brought about—in people, and attitudes, rather than simply in administration—were astonishing. It is only yesterday that art students were paragons of self-satisfied apathy, farther removed (even) than most other British students from any sort of political consciousness.

Yet, the Hornsey movement has been very widely criticized, within the student political Left. Militants have tended to dismiss it as 'unpolitical', or 'corporative', concerned only with the problems of art education and indifferent to wider issues. The Hornsey students confined themselves to stirring up other Art Colleges, and trying to establish a permanent control of power inside their own institution, instead of provoking a general crisis of British capitalism (or, at least, of the British Higher Education system). Why such narrow-mindedness? Does this not show indeed (in the words of R. Kuper)¹ how '... Student struggles *more than* any other form of struggle are less able to bring meaningful advances, unless we really believe in the nonsensical view of islands of libertarian communities in a sea of corporate organizations'.

There is a very important point at issue here, which is bound to affect one's view of the correct strategy for student revolutionary movements in Britain. Hornsey is indeed an archetype of 'corporate' development, in this sense. Again and again, the students there showed themselves hostile to 'politicization', in the terms offered by the existing left-wing groups. They consciously tried to confine the revolution to their own sector, to win significant and permanent victories within it rather than orient the movement towards the formation of a general revolutionary situation. But just how much importance do such limited movements have? How much weight will student power have politically, if it sticks to apparently 'trade-union' forms like this?

¹ 'Crisis in Higher Education: the Roots of Revolt', in *Teach Yourself Student Power*, ed. D. Adelman, RSA Publications, 1958.

In confronting this problem of revolutionary strategy, the first important point to note is the precise significance of a 'corporate' consciousness among students in Britain. It is rather absurd to dismiss a 'mere trade-unionist' awareness, when the overwhelming majority of students don't possess even this, and are still in a completely fragmented, 'proletarian' condition whose only relief is the rag-day or the Union hop. Traditional student 'union' activity of course did nothing to change this condition, it was a part of it. In Britain, a student take-over represents a very radical break with the past—however 'limited' it is. Therefore, a revolutionary strategy must whole-heartedly encourage such movements—in the same way as in the 19th century it was necessary to back trade unions—as a basis for future developments.

But—pursuing the analogy with the trade unions—it may be objected that the same thing could happen here. Could not student-power movements be isolated, in the same corporative way, as harmless 'islands', inside capitalist society—all the more easily, because of the middle-class background of most students?

The second point which ought to determine real revolutionary strategy is, surely, the recognition of the extreme unlikelihood of this happening, even in Britain. True, such a hope clearly animates the attitude of Authority towards the Hornsey revolt—because it has occurred among art students, seen as a marginal sector of Higher Education touched by bohemianism and so unlikely to contaminate those philistine bastions of intellect, the Universities. But the point is, that in the long run—whatever happens at Hornsey—such hope is illusory. There is no real possibility of a successful student corporativism becoming isolated, or a conservative barrier to further development.

There are two reasons for this. All movements of this type, however 'limited', are movements towards *power*, towards control of the process of mental production in which students are involved. This is just where the analogy with the unions—valid up to a point—disappears. Secondly, the process itself is a vital one for the entire functioning of society. As David Adelman points out: 'The prime function of higher education used to be the recruiting and cultural buttressing of the social elite. Nowadays it has an added dimension—the fundamental role it plays in the economy. For skilled manpower is the scarcest resource of industrial society. It is in this fact that collective student action gains its significance.'² To this, one should add that in 'industrial society' the intellectuals produced by higher education also have an increasingly important general *social* role as creators of the consensus required by the machinery of repression. This is outside the 'economy', traditionally conceived—though it can also be seen as meaning that today's 'economy' is universal, and co-extensive with 'society'.

Capitalist society could foster forms of corporative existence in the instrumental class which it created to work its apparatus of material production; autonomy within its 'brain' is another matter altogether. Traditionally, exploitation in the sphere of material production was

² *ibid.*

maintained (especially under conditions like those in Britain) by a parallel machinery of mental production (ideology, etc). Under the circumstances of late capitalism—as the events of May showed—a crisis in the latter sphere can be literally catastrophic. The British ruling class, confident in its successful past strategy of containment, naturally does not realize the dimensions of the new threat. Here, as in so many other respects, it is living out past routines.

But it is wrong for would-be revolutionaries to do the same. Student-power movements are potentially revolutionary in character—whether they have yet acquired a full consciousness of this fact and its implications, or not. It is obvious that, in British conditions, they are likely to evolve such a consciousness fairly slowly. How could it be otherwise? One College—or even a fairly widespread sectoral movement, as this has become—cannot overcome the entrenched defects of an entire political culture. To criticize students for such a ‘failure’ is a serious tactical blunder, whose effect (as at Hornsey) is simply to delay the awakening of the awareness in question.

An increasingly explosive situation is developing in the advanced capitalist countries today. The fact is, however, that the ‘revolutionaries’ available to exploit this situation are—barring nobody—all products of the stagnant, non-revolutionary situation of many decades past. During this long ice-age, inevitably, revolutionaries were forced to identify the revolution with *themselves*. In other words, ‘sectarianism’ was a necessary, defensive reflex protecting the spirit of revolution throughout this era. But in the thaw, this reflex is becoming truly disastrous. The problem has become, urgently, that of educating the educators—and no movement which fails to recognize the problem will have any grip whatever upon coming events. Except, naturally, the negative, obstructive one which was fortunately fairly slight at Hornsey (and this was an important constituent in the movement’s success).

Still deeply convinced that they were the Revolution, some outside speakers went to Hornsey to guide the movement into their orbit with the appropriate slogans and abstract ideas. They did not take the trouble to inquire into the actual conditions of what was happening, the existing state of mind of the majority, the real possibilities offered by the situation as it was (which are always ‘limited’!). It did not occur to them that their job, as revolutionaries, was to be educated by what was happening—by the revolution before their eyes—as well as to educate. Is it surprising that they encountered a hostile reaction? Having no living sense of relationship to what was happening—without which it is not possible to *be* a revolutionary, in such a situation—they were incapable of elaborating any tactic of generosity that could at once encourage the movement and push it just the distance further that was possible, then and there, towards an ultimate political consciousness.

There will be more Hornseys, under British conditions. It is clear that, under these conditions, the correct strategy for revolutionaries is to encourage the student-power trend to the utmost, however ‘corporate’ it may be, and to participate in it whole-heartedly with the aim of ensuring that its revolutionary potential is realized and that reformist

pitfalls are avoided. For the time will come, if revolutionary students play the role that they can and should, when such movements develop a more adequate awareness of their meaning, in a wider revolutionary situation. Student power will transcend itself, as an idea and as a fact. It can't be *made* to do so immediately, by the brandishing of ice-age adages. To amend a well-known adage from before the ice-age: the emancipation of the students must be the work of the students themselves.

Context and Lessons of the Hornsey Occupation

Britain has no CRS, and her policemen go unarmed. Authority has worked traditionally through the consent of its victims, in other words. Getting their minds early on, it rarely needs to cudgel their skulls later. The slave who believes in gentlemanly fair-play is the safest bet of all: he will always feel that revolt is not quite the decent thing to do. And anyway, if the mystification breaks down at any point, the cudgel is always there.

The Hornsey occupation has demonstrated certain aspects of this British situation in rich comic relief. Probably as student revolt grows the cudgel will come to be used more, and more rapidly. But for the present, the Hornsey experience is full of valuable lessons for sitters-in.

It began as rebellion against the educational Authority in the college. The May 28th teach-in made itself permanent, and became a kind of living illustration of Marshall McLuhan's theses on modern education:

We now experience simultaneously the drop-out and the teach-in. The two forms are correlative. They belong together. The teach-in represents an attempt to shift education from instruction to discovery, from brain-washing instructors. It is a big, dramatic reversal. . . . The teach-in represents a creative effort, switching the educational process from package to discovery. . . .

The majority of the teaching staff reacted well to the reversal. They enjoy the creative effort and atmosphere, once they get used to it. But the higher echelons—from Heads of Departments upwards via the Vice-Principal and Principal to the Board of Governors—are a different story.

Of course, their immediate and lasting reflex is simple: to stop it. But the whole point about the British situation is that one can't stop it *at any cost*. To use too much force too crudely, or too publicly, disqualifies the normal mechanisms of servility. It permanently damages the mystification. If they had rushed the fuzz up Crouch End Hill instantly to battle in front of the tv cameras and pressmen, nobody would ever have 'consented' to anything again, in that sense. As for the watching world . . . how soon would LSE have struck in sympathy, how many other Art Colleges would have been affected?

Here is the first lesson: if the revolt is big enough, and has good public relations, it can make Authority retreat, and wait. Obviously this is

easier in London, closer to the centres of the media. Further away, or where a smaller percentage of student opinion is mobilized—as at Guildford Art College—it may crack down at once.

However, crossing this first threshold of violence is a deceptive victory. At Hornsey, Authority did not retreat so much as vanish away into thin air. The Principal at the time of writing had not been seen for three weeks. Governors, and representatives of the Haringey Borough Council (directly responsible for the College) occasionally appear with fixed, slightly uneasy smiles, and say it is all very interesting. The deposed court (known simply as 'Versailles') meets now and then at a safe distance from the revolution, to launch measures of harassment, all ridiculous. They distributed the classical McCarthyite loyalty oath among the staff, only to withdraw it under a hail of abuse. They sent the Health Inspectors to get the heart of the revolt, the student-run canteen, closed down. It turned out to be more hygienic than before. But all this farce must not be allowed to lull one into complacency: behind it, there is the real, waiting strategy of Power.

This is the second lesson: Authority may retreat, but it assumes that it can afford to, because time is on its side. And so it is. Sooner or later, a vacation will come along; the impetus of the revolution will slacken, people will become tired, and have the feeling of getting nowhere; then 'the Rule of Law will be restored', quietly and easily, in the words of Alderman Cathles, Chairman of Haringey's Education Committee. A reliable observer states that the smile with which Cathles uttered these words hasn't left his face once in the last 15 years. Then, the trouble-makers can be dealt with, the agitators will have their contracts ended, or their grants stopped . . . the children will have had their fun, and things will go back to 'normal'. In Britain, Authority may agree to lose a battle now and then; precisely because it is so profoundly sure of winning the war.

This is the situation which must determine a revolutionary strategy. Revolutions usually develop in constant combat with their enemy: they sustain their drive and define their aims in the heat of tooth-and-claw battle. Where Power feels smug enough to retreat, the revolt is thrown much more on to its own resources. Somehow, it has to feed off itself, maintain its subjective tension, its cohesion, its aims, through its self-activity. In many ways, this is the severest test.

The trouble is, the resources aren't enough. How could they be? Revolutions make new men, but not from one day to the next. It takes a long time. Inevitably, the culture one is thrown back upon—even at 18—is basically that of the old régime. The enemy is within.

Third lesson: recognize the enemy within, and concentrate on him when Authority outside plays the waiting game. British revolutions are serious, orderly, moral affairs, admirable in their fairness and tenacity. What they tend to lack is a similar confidence in *imagination*. Big ideas remain unreal: Jerusalem can't be built, yet, because we haven't worked out the drainage system. Shall we appoint a committee to work out some practical, concrete proposals about it? British practice-fetish,

British distrust of the philosophical idea and the moving vision—scourges of every left-wing group we have—don't just evaporate in a revolutionary situation. They have to be fought, with a programme of intensive cultural activity. Even in an Art College, the typically British revolutionary problem isn't restraining the mad intellectuals: it consists in finding them, and encouraging them to speak up. How can one defeat a Haringey Borough Council (or a House of Commons), if one carries it around inside oneself? And what would be the point?

Postscript

Early in the morning of July 4th Haringey Borough Council sent security police with guard dogs to surround and close the Art College. At the time only two dozen students were in the building. After re-occupying his office the Principal offered a string of 'concessions' to the students including a Commission on the future of the College. A meeting of the Students eventually accepted this situation, with the more militant among them going to join the occupation of Guildford Art College.

Essex

David Triesman

On May 7th 200 students and staff demonstrated against a talk to be given by Dr Inch of Porton Down, the government germ warfare establishment on Salisbury Plain. On the 10th, despite the fact that the demonstration was eventless, the Vice-Chancellor suspended three of us. A mass meeting convened within minutes of the suspension and, aside from a break for the weekend, carried on continuously until the 20th. On Friday 17th, students jubilantly acclaimed a victory because, by a technical device, Pete Archard, Rafi Halberstadt and I were reinstated. But what in fact had we won, and what had we lost?

A number of conflicts were highlighted by these expulsions. Firstly, there was a conflict which greets every demonstration here. We are on a remote campus near a remote town in which political activity is non-existent. Not, lamentably, having created political situations in town, we have engaged in demonstrations against particular political objectives on campus. The result is that we are always acting within the bounds of control of the University. Secondly, there is a critical difference between the cultural attitudes of the Senate members and ourselves. They are from a generation which is paranoid about both Communism and Fascism on the grounds that they inhibit 'free speech'—a mystified absolute. We are a post-CND generation, taught our final lessons in Grosvenor Square. Against Inch we knew the value of demonstrations, and would repeat the demonstration tomorrow.

The issue around which the mass meetings coalesced was the fact that three people were victimized without even being told what they were supposed to have done. Essentially this is a liberal issue if it is not seen that the University is engaged in manufacturing degrees, and the investors in the factory will not tolerate dissent. (Here they won't ever

tolerate a Company Union.) In an effort to keep the entire body of students and staff together in a group for the whole week, the Left allowed themselves to be conned into a game of consensus politics. The cost is plain enough. When the issue died and Senate waved exams at us, the students went back to the library without maintaining their challenge to Senate, which had literally robbed it of any legitimacy by Thursday 16th. They had had the Senate reduced to incompetent incoherence, but they let the chance to take over the University slip away. Although there were some gains—more politicized cadres, more radicals with less respect for authority within the institution—there was a defeat, and the fault lies with the Left. We must take the blame, and learn the lessons.

The lessons are these. We must not be afraid of polarization. If there is a moderately large minority committed to action, as there was, they must begin as soon as is possible to hold sanctions over the University. We had a chance to do this on Monday 13th, taking part of the building and confiscating the property of the administration, but we mis-timed the attempt. Secondly, the staff must not be encouraged to come in too soon. They cannot help being a moderating influence since they can scarcely incite us to seize the University. What we should do, if the situation were to arise again, would be to behave as provocatively as necessary and to effectively sanction the University to the extent that they *would* use force, probably the police. Complete occupation of offices rather than corridors will achieve this. It is at this stage, that the administrations commit their ultimate folly, and it is at this stage that the staff and less political students will feel encouraged to enter a situation already politically structured.

The crucial point is this. Universities are linked to a set of productivity norms which, in order to be met, need a system as authoritarian as any other factory. Expose that, by linking it with outside repressive forces, police, demands for action from the University Grants Committee and so on, and the first cracks will appear in the façade. When the outside insists on coming inside, we will know two things. One, we will lose; but the loss of 'socialism on one campus' is inevitable and should stimulate support in all the others during the really hard struggle. Two, we will have won, because we will force the Administrations to openly show their relation to the capitalist machine, and the institutions' implicit aim of producing a new generation of managers to rule the working class. Maybe, at that point, the students who will go from a position of militancy into the outside world—who will be expected to fit in, to teach children to leave school at 16 to work the rest of their lives on a shop floor, to socially engineer the decaying capitalist structure to keep the whole nauseating apparatus from collapsing—will ask exactly what the point of their education was, and what use it could be towards making a socialist society. And maybe the workers will begin to ask why they are bearing the brunt of the cost to finance the production of their future governors.

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Structural Reform in Italy— Theory and Practice

Since the war, the Italian Left has become well known abroad for four reasons: first, because it was the only movement where Communists and Socialists maintained a united front uninterruptedly through the depths of the cold war; second, because the PCI built itself into the largest Marxist party in any capitalist country (roughly five times the members of the PCF); third, because Togliatti was in the vanguard of the move towards 'polycentrism' after the Twentieth Congress; fourth, because in the late fifties and early sixties Italy was often considered to be the centre of the most advanced political practice on the Left in the industrialized societies of today.

The purpose of this article is to examine two phenomena: the process of forming the Centre-Left régime (by which the ruling class tried both to split the unity of the Left and to pressure a sector of the proletarian movement towards the Right); and the reactions of the PCI and the PSIUP (left socialist party) to this political shift. In this way, it is possible to examine briefly two of the alternative strategies open

to the Left in Italy in the present situation: either to join a coalition with parties to the Right (as the PSI opted to do); or to attempt to devise an opposition from the Left, while being a minority (the PCI & PSIUP). The way these problems have been handled theoretically as well as practically relates very closely to the specific situation in Italy (in particular to the multiplicity of parties, which forces coalitions).

One of the Left's main claims in the post-war period was working class unity—mistakenly identified with PCI-PSI collaboration. The 1968 election has shown that a solid third of the country continues to oppose the Centre-Left; but the student revolution and the nature of recent industrial revolt have thrown into question the representativity of the traditional left parties. Is the PCI capable of using its strength as a party? Can it build up a new kind of organization against the dominant structures of the system—which in present conditions means winning over much greater forces to a new political position, rather than forming coalitions with existing political forces as they are now? The party has over 1½ million members and one quarter of the electorate. Apart from Czechoslovakia in the immediate post-war period, this is the most advanced point reached by any Communist movement in an industrialized capitalist society. What has been achieved? What has Italian politics been like in this last decade?

The Condition of the State

The most important event in Italian politics since 1948 has undoubtedly been the formation of the Centre-Left régime. The political questions surrounding this event provide much of the material from which the theses of 'structural reform' were constructed. Immediately, there are two particular factors to be borne in mind. There is first the specificity of the party-political configuration in Italy, with its fast-changing social background (there are both more parties and more classes than in 'solidified' industrial societies); especially the importance of PSI-PCI unity in the unions and the local councils, the traditional absence of any powerful social-democratic force in the country, and the predominance of an inter-class clerical formation (the Christian Democrats). The second factor is the rotten condition of the Italian State, which is the context within which the theory and practice of 'Structural Reform' in Italy must be set.

1. The condition of the State in Italy means that there is objectively an enormous amount of leeway for 'reform' of every kind; the State has not yet solidified into a final capitalist-social-democratic form.

2. This cuts both ways. On the one hand the relative fluidity of the situation means there are more possible points for antagonistic insertion into the system than in a country like, say, Sweden. The rapid pace of change means the system is more open to dislocation, more likely to be off balance at times. On the other hand, Italian neo-capitalism ~~used~~ reforms if it is to have the efficient State it wants (particularly inter-

nationally, *vis-à-vis* the EEC¹ and US capital). In fact *neo-capitalism needs structural reform of the existing State*. A precise distinction therefore has to be made between structural reforms which are anti-capitalist and those which are not—and this depends on what the State can take.

3. Because the State is not in a condition to effect the social reforms the Left has called for, the Left has tended to demand the reform and strengthening of the State apparatus, as a precondition of any social reforms. This emphasis is central to PCI policy.

4. However the average Italian's experience of the State is of a corrupt and oppressive bureaucratic machine, not of a benign dispenser of welfare. While there is a powerful and informed popular loathing of capitalism, nationalizations do not inevitably appeal in these conditions. There is, of course, a positive aspect to this: the absence of social-democratic mystification about the non-class nature of the state.

5. The 'inefficiency' of the State has to some extent been deliberately fostered by the ruling strata; for it is an inefficiency which, with all its drawbacks for the modern sector of capitalism, is still 'paying' in many ways. Delays of several years in the courts, massive tax evasion and generalized corruption all benefit the rulers more than the ruled.

6. The role of the Vatican is a crucial dimension of the problem of the Italian State. The extent of the Vatican's importance in Italian life is generally underestimated. First, the Vatican is a greater financial power than Italy. According to an *Economist* estimate (March 27th, 1965), its realizable assets are roughly equivalent to the official gold and foreign exchange reserves of France. It is 'far and away the world's largest shareholder, with a portfolio of quoted securities the world over totalling the equivalent of 2,000 million pounds' before devaluation. Approximately one-tenth of this is in Italy. Under the Concordat the Vatican enjoys exemption from Italian dividend tax—and has threatened reprisals if this privilege were tampered with by the Centre-Left government. Second, as a result of the Concordat, the Vatican virtually controls education, marriage and related areas of 'civil' life. Third, it meddles actively in politics.

Economic and Social Changes

From 1952 to 1962, the year when the Centre-Left really began, 16

¹ Largely because of incompetent bureaucrats Italy signed a number of catastrophic agreements, particularly involving agriculture. As is well known, Italy's inability then to keep pace with the agreements she had signed was one of the main causes of the agricultural crisis in the EEC, during which France offered to carry half the additional deficit with which Italy could not cope. Training the kind of technocrats who can stand the pace at Brussels is a structural reform (involving a drastic approach to both education and patronage) which is in the interests of the ruling class; equally, it requires time. Yet even good bureaucrats would be little use without an improved agricultural system. According to the *Corriere della Sera* (March 17th 1965) there is only one agrarian technician for every 30,000 farms in Italy (cf. 1 for every 200 in Holland and Belgium). Italy, though not by any means a heavily industrialized country compared with her EEC partners, is responsible for more than one third of Common Market agricultural imports. International competition aggravates what is a multiple-level contradiction (landholding, distribution, agronomists, and bureaucrats).

million Italians changed their residence.² Internal migration involved an average of 1½-2 million people per annum. About 2 million people emigrated abroad during the decade. The entire natural demographic increase was absorbed in urban growth (municipal capitals grew by 3 million). Emigration was particularly severe among the young (Italy has had by far the youngest *émigré* workers).

Employment within Italy itself rose from 16,840,000 in 1950 to 19,199,099 in 1965. Over 5 million women are now employed as wage-earners. In agriculture the number of dependent labourers fell from 2,660,000 in 1950 to 1,573,000 in 1965. Total labour in agriculture fell by 31.5 per cent in the decade 1951-61 (from 8,261,160 to 5,657,440).

Working conditions have remained utterly unsatisfactory by any standards. The first firm government guarantee of a minimum wage was a law in July 1959. The 1939 (Fascist) law on residence certificates and the 1949 law banning unemployment registration except in the municipality of legal residence were not removed until 1961. Apart from being used to expel PCI organizers from other provinces, these laws had meant that hundreds of thousands of 'clandestine' workers were being exploited in the North (without a residence permit they could not apply for work through the labour office). Even now the position of the working class and its organizations is *de facto* extremely weak. The *Economist* has pointed out that from the beginning of 1964 'wage payments actually lagged behind negotiated wage scales'—a phenomenon it describes as 'negative wage drift'.³ At this basic level capitalism still maintains iron and ruthless control. The major working class gains in the early 'sixties were essentially belated sops from capitalism for the immense exploitation perpetrated throughout the decade of the 'miracle'. Vera Lutz has shown that the real income of a single worker rose only 9 per cent in the period 1950-59.⁴ The trade unions are still fighting for a workers' statute (promised by the Centre-Left). Even with the contractual successes of the early sixties the working class was easily thrown completely on to the defensive by the 'recession' (i.e. controlled reorganization) of 1963-64, when unemployment rose to 1,400,000 with a further 1 million workers on short time. In Turin alone 250,000 people were hit by full or partial unemployment, and the population of the city decreased by 51,000 people in the year 1964 alone. The total number of people employed fell by 1 per cent over the period 1960-64 (compared with a rise of 6 per cent in the gross domestic product for the period 1959-64).

The Background to the Centre-Left

This is part of the background to the formation of the Centre-Left.

² Many of the figures in this section are taken from Amendola's article, *L'avvenire della Repubblica, Critica Marxista* 2, 1966, which celebrates the 20th anniversary of the Republic in a politically outrageous manner.

³ *The Economist*, May 22nd 1965, p. 934.

⁴ Vera Lutz, *Italy: a Study in Economic Development*, London, 1962, p. 221. Lutz reaches this figure by deflating the rise in the average minimum contractual rates of pay by the rise in the ISTAT cost-of-living index. In *L'avvenire della Repubblica* Amendola claims that there was a rise in real wages in industry between 1950 and 1965 of about 55 per cent (p. 26): this seems exaggerated.

These conditions both legitimized the idea of a coalition in the eyes of many Italians and undoubtedly aroused genuine aspirations for immediate improvement and reform among many members of the PSI. To describe Nenni's decision to enter the government as a 'betrayal' is both to overestimate his commitment to socialism and to underestimate the strong ground swell in the party (and outside it) for a new start—a bid to reform the system from within rather than from without. In the party apparatus there was a strong desire for power and a life of ease after 20 years in opposition. Nenni himself and many of the party leaders with him had an essentially social-democratic vision of political life.

Since 1949 the Christian Democrats (DC) had dominated a series of so-called 'centrist' governments with the PLI (Liberal Party), the PSDI (Social-democrats) and the tiny PRI (Republicans). There were several factors combining to work for a change towards the end of the fifties.

1. There had been considerable changes in the Vatican since Pius XII's death.⁶ Meanwhile, Nenni had differentiated himself sufficiently from the Communists, even in the eyes of the Vatican, to be considered quite separately.
2. There was also a tendency within the DC itself towards some kind of

⁵ The usage is arbitrarily subjective. The Christian Democrats unilaterally defined themselves as being the 'centre'; anybody else whom they needed to govern with them was permitted into the 'democratic area' (*Area democratica*). Everyone outside this were 'extremists' and thus deprived not only of any say in politics but even of the right to a say. Hence the fact that the Left opposition outside the government might be two or three times the size of the Right opposition was irrelevant: the government was still 'centrist'. The opposition outside the 'Centre-Left', prior to the 1968 elections, on its left was 30 per cent—while that on its right was less than 14 per cent.

⁶ After the war, the PCI sided with the DC in voting to maintain the Fascist Concordat in the Constitution: this is an exemplary case of the kind of institutional compromise which has severely restricted the PCI's freedom of manoeuvre to operate a correct policy towards the Catholic workers. Far from adopting a critical standpoint on this, the PCI has continued to defend its action in voting for article 7. Answering a left-wing Catholic on this, Alessandro Natta produced the following justification (*Risposta a un cattolico democratico*, *Rinascita* April 10th, 1965): 'It [voting for article 7] was an attempt—an extremely serious attempt—precisely to *laicise* politics, to stimulate the Catholic movement and the DC itself to win political autonomy for themselves, since its purpose was to clear the ground of the religious question and put all the emphasis on carrying through an advanced programme of democratic renewal of the society and the state, which [it was reasoned at the time] would almost certainly allow the causes for the existence of the Concordat and all it involved to be transcended. This was not an abstract vision, it was a dialectical vision of the political forces and of the possible development of Italian society.' Against this must be set the following remarks: 'Most compromising, perhaps, are the PCI's policies toward the Church . . . the party has been politically crippled from agitating publicly for the removal of the Church's stranglehold over secular education or for the promulgation of modern marriage laws. And since the Church continues to dominate Italian culture and training, Italy has been unable to produce the progressive, open-minded group of lower level militants that Gramsci called the organic intellectuals.' (Sidney G. Tarrow, *Peasant Communism in Southern Italy*, p. 156). The correct policy of attempting to detach the Catholic working-class base from the DC has been hampered by the failure to develop an all-out critique of the Church in all its forms (Vatican as State power, DC as political party). Unfortunately for the Italians, the Vatican is very much their responsibility as it is de facto housed in Italy and heavily dependent on the products of Italian education and culture for its personnel.

President Kaunda and Mr Smith*

review

Reap the Whirlwind

by Geoffrey Bing

63s

A whirlwind of critical comment greeted the publication of REAP THE WHIRLWIND, an account of Nkrumah's Ghana from 1950 to the downfall of the President in 1966. For four of those years Geoffrey Bing was Ghana's Attorney-General, and he was imprisoned at the time of the revolt that overthrew Nkrumah.

President Kaunda of Zambia reviewed it for the *Sunday Times*:

'Geoffrey Bing makes it clear from the early pages of this vital and fascinating record of the most significant period in the history of independent Africa that he is writing a largely personal account of the sixteen years during which he was associated with Ghana . . . His basic conclusion is that Dr Nkrumah's attempt failed in part through local weaknesses and mistakes but mainly because the world was determined it should not succeed . . .

Bing writes without bitterness of his humiliations and imprisonment after the Ghana military coup in 1966, and it is evident that these experiences have not coloured his basic conviction, recorded early in the book, that co-operation between African and European on a basis of equality is possible irrespective of colour . . . I believe and pray that Mr Bing's book will bring home to many of those who have hitherto criticised independent African States in general and Nkrumah's Ghana in particular, the magnitude of the difficulties African statesmen are called upon to face . . .

The Enormous Room

by E E Cummings

36s

E E Cummings went to France during the first world war with an American ambulance corps and through a series of misadventures found himself in the prison of La Ferté—The Enormous Room.

'This new edition of THE ENORMOUS ROOM,' wrote *Anthony Powell* in the *Daily Telegraph*, 'a work that has been out of print for years in this country, should be read by everyone who enjoys real originality in approach to life and to writing. . . . The inhabitants of The Enormous Room were a mixed bag of unfortunates, some of them pimps . . . but most of them harmless oddities. The women, in a separate part of the establishment, were prostitutes who had got on the wrong side of the law . . . Beyond emphasising its brilliant reportorial skill, it is hard to describe THE ENORMOUS ROOM. It should be read for its violence, wit and moving comment.'

'Long before such overrated writers as Ionesco' said *Martin Seymour-Smith* in *The Scotsman*, 'Cummings was discovering and recording the sense of existence as gratuitous and absurd; while Sartre was still in short trousers he had said, in his own inimitable way, much of what Sartre was going to say . . . THE ENORMOUS ROOM must surely rank as one of the great stories of confinement of all time . . .'

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* **Martin Seymour-Smith, of course**

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reforms; and the conservative leadership of the party had to consider the interests of their large peasant and working-class electorate to some extent. The emergence of an un-anathematized 'socialist' party would obviously otherwise be a threat to the Christian Democrats.⁷

3. The PLI had evolved from a mainly southern rural party with a classic 'liberal' outlook into a northern urban organization with a retarded entrepreneurial ideology appealing to smaller business and the bourgeoisie: its systematic opposition to any change whatsoever was so stubborn that the PSDI began to express unwillingness to remain in a coalition with it.⁸

4. At the same time the class coalition organized within the 'centrist' governments was in danger of losing its necessary characteristic—viz. that it should be a *strategic class majority*. Increasing industrialization had concentrated more and more power in industry. While the capitalist class had been growing more powerful, the proletariat had also been growing more crucial to the whole working of the society. A government coalition which had considerably more than half the urban working class in opposition on its left could not consider itself secure.

Thus a situation arose in which the DC both needed a shift in the governing coalition *and* found that a good moment had come to split the previously united working-class movement. But even given this favourable situation, the DC divided and hesitated before going ahead with the project. The right wing of the party pessimistically refused to believe that the PSI could be digested: the most extreme manifestation of this tendency came with the Tambroni experiment in 1960. The DC formed a government with fascist aid, but this was a purely numerical majority which rapidly proved incapable of surviving because of intolerable contradictions within it, and between it and the society as a

⁷ Mattel Dogan, *Le Comportement Politique des Italiens*, in the *Revue Française de Science Politique*, June 1959, calculates that about two million workers voted DC in the 1958 general election—i.e. about 16 per cent of the DC poll came from the urban working class (= male and female industrial workers + wives of industrial workers: the DC polls a much higher vote amongst women). Dogan estimates that the DC got a higher-than-average working-class vote in the industrial North (about $\frac{1}{4}$ in Lombardy and Piedmont). This is less surprising than it may seem at first, when it is recalled that the DC's real strength is in northern not, as is sometimes popularly imagined, southern Italy. This presents a real problem to the Left, particularly the PCI: both the DC and the ex-FSI are traditionally heavily entrenched in the North, and the North is becoming even more preponderant in the country's economy and politics every day. The Common Market has definitively clinched this position. The biggest area of PCI gains between the war and the 1968 elections was in the southern rural areas, which are of declining importance. The importance of the 1968 elections was the Centre-Left decline in the strategically advanced areas. None of the parties in Italy is quite what it seems at first sight. Just as the DC is stronger in the North than in the South, so the PCI is much stronger in the Centre than in the North ($3\frac{1}{2}$ times the party membership proportionate to the population). Both parties, the PCI as well as the DC, reflect the problems of a multi-class base in their policies. Dogan's ecological conjectures should be handled with care, but in default of other information from Italian sources they are the most useful available.

⁸ After the 1964 elections it became difficult to form 'centrist' *giovane* in some areas, particularly in Central Italy, where the PCI and PSI combined had a majority in three provinces (Tuscany, Umbria and Emilia-Romagna).

whole.⁹ Aldo Moro, then secretary general of the party, championed a radically new formula: a new class coalition, which automatically entailed new political alliances. Moro saw that the new solution must establish a coalition which was politically stable because sociologically secure. Thus he believed that it was crucial not merely to create a minor split at the top of the PSI or absorb its leadership, but to win over the majority of the party with its working-class and middle-class support, and, even more important, win over a sizeable section of the *organized* working-class *movimenti* for the governing coalition.

The Formation of the Centre-Left

Since 1956 Nenni had reopened communications with Saragat, then leader of the Social-Democrats. In September 1959 Nenni broached the possibility of giving PSI support to a Centre-Left régime on the basis of individual issues. After the Tambroni government fell, Fanfani formed a minority government composed solely of Christian Democrats (August 1960); this was supported by the old centrist parties, while the PSI abstained—even though the cabinet included right-wing Christian Democrats who were vociferously hostile to the ‘opening to the Left’ and had pushed the party into the ludicrous Tambroni adventure.

In the spring of 1961 the PSI agreed to join several local councils with its future Centre-Left partners—e.g. in Milan, Florence, Genoa—while continuing its alliance with the PCI in other places. This was the decisive demonstration of the new PSI policy. Unity of the Left in the local administrations and in the trade unions had been an axiom of all post-war politics. Splitting the PSI from the PCI in these two fields was the No. 1 objective of the Moro project; yet the PSI carried out the essential first stage in the deal *before* getting into the government at all. The DC had insisted on this concession as a demonstration of the PSI’s commitment to ‘democracy’.

At the end of January 1962 the Christian Democrats held their decisive Congress in Naples, where Moro delivered a five-hour speech endorsing an ‘opening to the left’, as it was then still called. The Congress agreed to the new policy, but insisted on rejecting any ‘organic’ unity of action with the PSI. The *dorotei*¹⁰ stressed the need for the PSI to break all their links with the PCI at local and trade-union levels.

In February discussions began between the four parties (DC, PSDI, PRI, PSI) on a three-party government (the above minus the PSI). A month

⁹ The Tambroni cabinet was a Christian Democrat minority government which had the backing of all the parties to the right of the DC, including the *FORUM* (Monarchists) and the *MSI* (Fascists); popular hostility to it was focused by mass demonstrations which began in Genoa against the projected *MSI* Congress in that city.

¹⁰ The *dorotei* (named after the monastery where the group met to plot the downfall of Fanfani) were at the time the dominant (right-wing) faction in the DC, controlling about half the votes at the party congress. The group includes Rumor, Piccoli and Colombo.

later Fantani was able to present his programme. The main points were:

- 1) implementation of regional autonomy¹¹
- 2) an overhaul of the State bureaucracy
- 3) educational reform, including application of the existing law on compulsory schooling up to 14
- 4) revision of 'abnormal' agricultural contracts and the progressive abolition of share-cropping
- 5) economic planning
- 6) a commitment to present a plan for the electricity industry within three months of a confidence vote.¹²

The three government parties voted in favour; the PSI abstained. It should be noted that the programme consisted almost entirely of commitments to apply existing laws (1 and 3) or commitments to correct monstrous failures in the existing system (2 and 4).

The only action during this government's year in office was the nationalization of the electricity industry. But, as is well known, this was carried out in an utterly reactionary way. The electricity monopoly Edison was presented with vast loads of cash which enabled them to buy out numerous smaller industries during the subsequent recession—ultimately including the chemical giant Montecatini. The regions were shelved until after the election—except for Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The schools programme was repeatedly compromised. A half-hearted attempt to modernize the tax system by trying to force share-holders to declare their holdings failed, even though massive exemption was offered in return. On the Right, capitalism reacted swiftly by removing something over £500,000,000 abroad. A planned recession was initiated. The right wing of the DC exploited trade-union militancy to press for further PSI dissociation from the PCI.

In April 1963 there was a general election. The PCI gained over a million votes and went up from 22.7 per cent to 25.3 per cent of the poll. The Centre-Left parties as a group fell from 62.7 per cent to 59.6 per cent, with the DC dropping from 42.4 per cent in 1958 to 38.3 per cent.

¹¹ One of the clauses in the Constitution stipulated that considerable autonomy should be given to each of the country's regions. At the time the Left were hostile to this, as they saw the regions as potential pockets of (opposition) power in what it was hoped would be a progressive state. The DC at the time supported the regions. Later the positions reversed. The Left saw the regions as possible enclaves (e.g. in Central Italy), while the DC saw no reason to set up centres of local opposition when it held power at the centre. Prior to the Centre-Left there were only four regions: Sicily, Sardinia, the Val d'Aosta and Trentino-Alto Adige—all outlying areas: two islands and two regions with large linguistic minorities. It need hardly be said that Friuli-Venezia Giulia is a solid Christian Democrat bastion. It is universally admitted that the bill on the regions is worthless without accompanying financial legislation, and without financial independence the fight for the regions is likely to become a rear-guard action. The PCI seems to have modified its original pessimism about the utility of the Constitution. At the time it was brought in the party stated that 'there were such obstacles in it that it would be almost impossible to carry out any profound structural changes on the basis of the Constitution.' (In *Due anni di lotta dei comunisti italiani*, p. 55).

¹² On these events see Jean Meynaud, *Rapport sur la Classe Dirigeante Italienne*, Lausanne, 1964.

Internal DC manoeuvres now resulted in the removal of Fanfani and his replacement by Moro. The agreement laboriously concluded by the delegations of the four parties on a coalition government was then rejected by the PSI Central Committee on June 17th (the so-called *motto di San Gregorio*). However, on the pretext of dealing with current business and in particular the need to have a Prime Minister to greet Kennedy when he arrived in Italy, the DC managed to set up a single-party minority government.

At the end of October the PSI held their 35th Congress, at which Lombardi the centrist leader switched his support back to Nenni, after withdrawing it at the Central Committee in June. Though Lombardi made an outstandingly lucid speech at the Congress, his political skill revealed itself once again as nil. There was not an iota of reason to back Nenni now any more than in June. Unfortunately Lombardi's support was crucial, and Nenni was able to begin negotiations again with the endorsement of 57 per cent of the Congress. The agreement reached after another month of haggling was endorsed by the Central Committee 59 to 40 (November 26th).

The new, quadripartite government had six PSI ministers, including Nenni as Vice-Premier. The PSI were given Public Works (to enable them to replenish the party coffers) and, after much struggle, the Budget—which included 'planning'.¹³ The PSDI, with only three ministers and considerably less than half the PSI vote, got two top posts—Finance and Foreign Affairs. Most of the Left of the PSI voted against the government in parliament and were suspended from the party.

On January 12th 1964 they seceded and the PSTUP was formed.¹⁴

The Government which the Left of the PSI rejected was quite unambiguous. It included the following commitments:

- 1) to apply the Constitution (regions, workers' statute, reform of the legal code to give equality to women, reform of the legal system to eliminate surviving Fascist laws)
- 2) a reform of the bureaucracy; a commitment to develop local authority; an agreement to make the judiciary more independent; a thorough educational reform
- 3) acceptance of NATO (which the PSI had long opposed); reform of Italy's representation in the EEC (both PCI and PSI were excluded from the Strasbourg Parliament, though the Italian delegation included Monarchists and Neo-fascists; the united Socialist-Communist trade union movement (CGIL) was similarly discriminated against)

¹³ The allocation of government posts is obviously a crucial factor in assessing any coalition. A detailed comparative study of this would be welcome. In general, it can be said that one of the rules which applies to structural reforms also applies to joining coalitions: one post, like one reform, is virtually useless on its own. Thus the Budget Ministry, although it appears to control planning, comes at the end of the economic chain in the government: its allocations are pre-determined by the ministers of the Treasury and Finance. A Budget Minister can only allocate what money has already been allocated to him.

¹⁴ Italian Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity: this was the name of the Socialist Party from August 1943 (when the MUP and the PSI merged) until the January 1947 split when the main body of the party went back to the name PSI to prevent Saragat taking it, along with its emotive pull.

- 4) planning was to be instituted: 18 months later *The Economist*¹⁵ noted wryly that 'if Britain's plan is no more than an expression of intent, Italy's seems barely an expression of hope'
- 5) reforms of the taxation system, social security, and agrarian structures (a reform of the Federconsorzi¹⁶ and the elimination of share-cropping)
- 6) stricter control over urban building land, including the possibility of municipal expropriation of non-utilized land; the programme made no mention of financial facilities for doing this, and with all local councils in debt to the central government the commitment was obviously utopian
- 7) immediate action to check the economic crisis: the only two measures which went into immediate and thorough effect were a freeze on public expenditure and an incomes policy

As Meynaud comments: 'if there is one word to describe this programme it is moderation . . . There is not a single measure which a conservative government which had the interests of its country at heart would hesitate one moment to accept.'¹⁷

Reactions to the Centre-Left

The actual Centre-Left programme is itself eloquent testimony to the country's condition, which in turn was fundamental to the behaviour of the various interested groups in reacting to the new political situation. The Christian Democrats were acutely aware of the need to continue bourgeois democratic reforms if they were to survive as the dominant party in a period of multiple troubles: in particular the new relationship with the Vatican, and the heavy pressure on Italy's traditional structures from the Common Market and us capital. Thus big Italian capital was by and large very favourable to a general reform. It was small and middle capital (partly represented by the PLI) which was most hostile to the Centre-Left and 'rationalization'.

In fact the situation was also objectively promising for the Left. It was obvious that the DC ~~needed~~ at least part of the political Left to survive. This was demonstrated by the Tambroni fiasco. The PSI was therefore in a position of strength, not weakness. No stable government could be formed without it. But the PSI decision to join the coalition was guided by a classic social-democratic notion, what might be called the 'two-stage theory of reform'. This was subsequently given in Nenni's famous expression that it was necessary to enter *la stanza dei bottoni* (the 'control room') in order to be able to accomplish anything whatsoever.

¹⁵ *Economist*, May 22nd 1965.

¹⁶ The Federconsorzi is the most powerful agricultural organization in Italy. Like the Coltivatori Diretti, it is closely controlled by the mighty DC *notabile*, Paolo Bonomi. The Federconsorzi acts as the link between the farmers' organizations and big business. The *bonominismo*, as it is often called, has been involved in an unending succession of scandals. At some recent local elections Bonomi put up his own candidates against the official DC nominees: an indication of increasing contradictions between his interests and those of the central DC apparatus.

¹⁷ Meynaud, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

To a large extent the PCI shared this illusion. Hence its initially cautious approach to the experiment, as exemplified in Togliatti's speech in parliament on March 5th 1962, when he defined the PCI's opposition to the Centre-Left as an opposition 'of a special kind' (*di tipo particolare*).

However the PCI, for obvious reasons, always stressed an aspect which was absent from PSI pronouncements: the need to have some force behind a party to put through its programme. Among the Right of the party this easily became unprincipled entriism, bolstered by arguments of the kind that 'without the PCI it is impossible to change anything'. Yet even within this perspective what was remarkable about the PCI attitude was its defensiveness. Ever since the war the PCI had staked heavily on its alliance with the PSI in the unions and the local councils. It was extremely anxious not to break with the PSI at either of these levels, and was prepared to make sizeable concessions to preserve unity even after the PSI had formed a different and antagonistic alliance at the dominant level, the national government.

The emergence of the PSIUP brought a qualitatively new element on to the scene. Here was a party whose very *raison d'être* was explicit criticism and opposition to the Centre-Left in its entirety. It attacked not simply the inadequacies of the PSI in government but the whole coalition project in itself. The development of the PSIUP's critique of the Centre-Left as a whole helped to stimulate analysis among part of the PCI as well, after a frosty initial reception.

Structural Reform in Theory and Practice

The formation of the Centre-Left, and its subsequent complete immobilism bring a number of theoretical and practical problems into focus. Because Italian Left-wing theoreticians have had an important influence in other European countries, it is perhaps most useful to try and examine these problems through the mediation of their writings, and then attempt a brief critique of some of their positions. This will relate certain theoretical texts back to their concrete background (which has sometimes been lost)¹⁸, and make clear that, though a very wide range of theoretical work has been done in the PCI and the PSIUP, the concrete political practice has covered a less wide range and has shown remarkable ability to coexist with a formally more advanced theory. It should be stressed that the more advanced theory is very much a minority of the PCI's theoretical production as a whole. Amendola, Napolitano, Natta, or Fanti of the Right are much more representative of the PCI than, say, Trentin or Magri. Even in the PSIUP, anyone who studies *Mondo Nuovo* (the party weekly) will notice that such leaders as Basso, Foa and Libertini hardly represent the mainstream of that party's political practice.

¹⁸ This seems to be the case with Vittorio Foa's famous article, *I socialisti e il sindacato*. This was written for a special number of *Problemi del Socialismo* immediately prior to the 35th Congress of the PSI, when it was already obvious that Nenni would carry a majority for joining the Centre-Left government. Foa's objective in the article was to appeal to working-class unity by stressing trade-union as opposed to party unity since the class unity which had cracked at party level was still maintained in the union.

The first problem is obviously the historical condition of Italian capitalism and the Italian State.

The prevailing PCI view has two basic premises. The first is that, because the Italian capitalist system is so backward, all reforms threaten it. The second is that, because the State is in such rotten condition, its reform is a precondition of social reforms.

The thesis that the system is so fragile that it is threatened by any reform is advanced by Togliatti in one of his last articles, *Capitalism and Structural Reforms*.¹⁹ 'To what extent are the leading groups of the big bourgeoisie . . . disposed to accept even some moderate bourgeois-reformist measures? To what extent is bourgeois reformism possible in Italy at all? . . . We must consider the present structure of Italian capitalism. Its historical formation and tradition, and the economic policies it has followed for decades, have produced a process of accumulation that is conditioned by the backwardness of half the country, by a surplus of labour and therefore a tremendously low level of wages and, finally, by artificial State support for the privileged stratum at the expense of the whole collectivity . . . On a structure of this kind it has always been rather difficult . . . to build a policy of bourgeois reformism. Instead this structure produced fascism.' Amendola goes further: 'Economic expansion [since the war] has taken place under the leadership of the monopoly groups and to their advantage, and it has therefore been translated not into economic and political stabilization but into an aggravation of *all* the contradictions, both old and new, which are at work in Italian society. *Every* increase [in wages] has created new problems, aroused new tensions and intensified further demands.'²⁰

Against this position, leftist writers have emphasized the futility of any isolated reforms, and the ability of the system to neutralize them. Claudio Napoleoni has commented: 'If the purpose of a change in the system of ownership [of the means of production] is to rationalize accumulation . . . and bring the structure and the dynamic of distribution into line with this objective, it must be stressed that none of these results can be achieved if the change in the system of ownership is not generalized to a point where all the key points of the economy are brought under public control. Furthermore, this process must not be seen as a gradual one, since extending it in time would obviously cause a complete paralysis in the productive process. Any left-wing position that is to be rigorous and clear must propose the swift establishment of a planned economy.'²¹ Magri confirms this: 'Many people have seen in the increasing extension of the area of state intervention in the economy and in the expansion of programmed investment options, greater possibilities for public intervention to orient the broad outlines of economic development, according to a hierarchy of established democratic ends. But in fact the experience of recent years in Italy and

¹⁹ *Capitalismo e riforme di struttura*, *Rinascita*, July 11th 1964.

²⁰ G. Amendola, *L'avvento della Repubblica*, loc. cit. (Italian added).

²¹ Claudio Napoleoni, *Salari e produttività nella recessione* Carli, *La Rivista Trimestrale* 5-6 (Carli is the Governor of the Bank of Italy).

in Europe has shown that the system reacts increasingly aggressively and automatically to any intervention which alters its dynamic. Any plan which really intends to orient economic development must now be a global plan, a long-term plan, a plan with rigorously defined options, with political and social power and institutional means to control the tremendous chain reaction which it is bound to provoke.²²

Napoleoni as an economist and Magri as a political theorist are here taking issue very explicitly with some of the dominant theses of the leading group of the PCI: in particular the idea of 'democratic planning'. In an exchange with the PSIUP economist Libertini, Amendola set out clearly what he means by the phrase 'democratic planning': 'It seems to me that [the PSIUP document on the economy] confuses problems which will arise *tomorrow* after the "overthrow of the capitalist state and the conquest of power by the workers", the problems of socialist planning . . . and the problem we are faced with *today* in the present situation and thus under the present system, which is to improve the living conditions of the workers, find a positive solution for the major national questions, impose a democratic policy of economic and political development as an alternative to monopoly expansion and thus push towards a transformation of the system in the direction of democracy and Socialism, by means of a kind of planning which is *democratic* because *anti-monopolist*—aimed at limiting the powers of the monopolies, by modifying the existing process of monopoly accumulation which is based on the search for maximum monopoly profit.'²³ This is a political division based on a fundamentally different assessment of the weight of the different kinds of appeal an opposition party can make in a bourgeois-democratic system. Either a party can announce what it would do if in power (PSIUP); or it can appeal to those in power to modify their policies. Both of these approaches are ultimately aimed at the masses, but their final form will be considerably modified depending on whether they go straight to the masses (the PSIUP document) or pass via the ruling power bloc (Amendola's suggestions). At the moment the 'democratic planning' position is very much an amalgam of elements: what the PCI expects the Centre-Left to do, what it could help the Centre-Left to do if it joined the government and what it thinks the country needs.

The main strategic conclusion drawn from this approach is the need for the 'anti-monopoly struggle'. This is the focus of disagreement between the PCI and the PSIUP (explicitly) and between the Right and Left within the PCI (implicitly). Amendola admits as much: 'The role of the anti-monopoly struggle seems to me to be the real point of disagreement.'²⁴ The reasoning behind the validation of the anti-monopoly struggle is: 1. that monopolies concentrate power in few hands; 2. that this power is increasingly remote from any kind of 'public' control; 3. that monopolies tend to restrict employment. The conclusion drawn from this is that the PCI must form a multi-class anti-

²² Lucio Magri, *Il valore e il limite delle esperienze frontiste*, *Critica Marxista* 4, 1965, p. 62. The point Magri is making cannot be overstressed.

²³ *Rinascita*, March 21st 1964 (Amendola's italics).

²⁴ *Rinascita*, March 21st 1964.

monopoly alliance. This is Amendola's 'new majority'. An extreme expression of what it can mean is to be found in an article by Guido Fanti, the mayor of Bologna: 'The keystone of the whole situation [in Emilia] remains the relationship between the working class and the middle strata in both the towns and the countryside.'²⁵ Fanti states explicitly that the PCI has been trying to establish a 'permanent alliance between the working class and the middle strata.' 'The new tasks of the PCI are to increase its role as the vanguard political party of the exploited classes and the subaltern classes and . . . as the organism which forges a vast alliance with *all* social groups who want to change their objective economic condition.'²⁶

The last phrase might seem like a slip of the pen but there is no reason to believe it is. It is merely a frank expression of one of the three serious flaws in the policy. First, monopolies *are* capitalism in its present stage. Monopolies are not an accidental deformation of capitalism, they just *are* capitalism. 'There can be no capitalism without monopolies. Elimination of the monopolies either means a hundred years of regression or expropriation and socialisation of the monopolies.'²⁷ Secondly, it is a mistake to confuse two quite different types of small industry—complementary and marginal.²⁸ *Complementary* small industry is indeed subordinate to the monopolies, but its existence depends on the maintenance of the existing structure. *Marginal* small industry is in competition with the monopolies and therefore has objective anti-monopoly interests; but it is important to bear in mind that this type is doomed under any kind of economic development. Thirdly, it is incorrect to offer the middle strata a mystified vision of socialism. They are not available for any but extremely limited anti-capitalist measures which are not consonant with Socialism.²⁹

There are also internal contradictions within the policy. In the first place, support for small and medium industry is unlikely to improve working-class wages, which are consistently highest in big industry. Secondly, the main investment demands of 'democratic planning' are in the capital goods sector (having previously been in the consumer goods sector), but this is a field in which only large units can hope to be competitive internationally. Thirdly, unless the mechanism of private accumulation is *fundamentally* altered there is no chance of raising the vast sums needed for this kind of investment other than by means which have been specifically and correctly rejected by the PCI (incomes policy).³⁰

²⁵ The specific experience in the 'red belt' (in Central Italy), where industry is small and is rarely tied to the big northern monopolies, has had a big effect on the formulation of PCI national policy.

²⁶ Guido Fanti, *Il partito in Emilia, Critica Marxista* 5-6, 1963 (my italics).

²⁷ Lucio Libertini, *Rinascita*, March 21st 1964.

²⁸ On this v. Vittorio Ricceri, *Sviluppo e congiuntura nel capitalismo italiano, Quaderni Rasse 4*, esp. p. 169.

²⁹ Lenin was particularly critical of the role of small production in Russia after the revolution. See for example, *A Great Beginning*, 1919 (*Collected Works*, 4th Russian edition. Vol. 29, pp. 377 ff.).

³⁰ Indirect confirmation of this is given in a curious passage in an article by Bruno Trentin, general secretary of the FIOM, the left-wing metal workers' federation which was a leading force in the industrial struggle in the early sixties. In *Politica dei*

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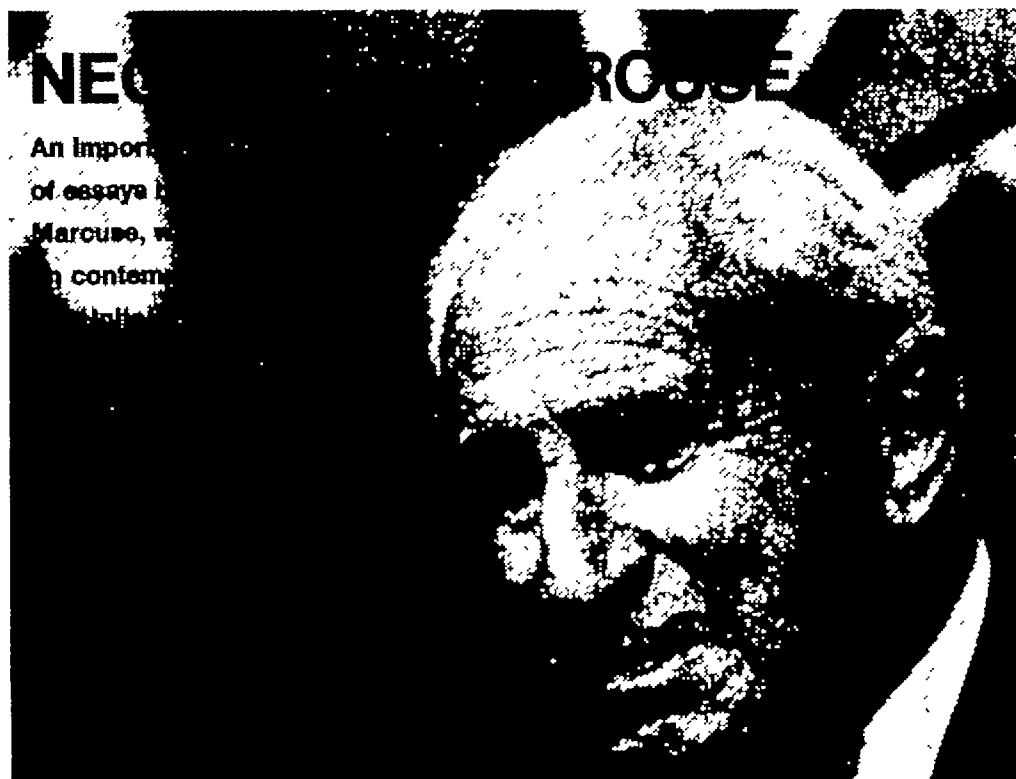
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A similar problem exists with agriculture. Libertini rightly points out that it is no more possible to turn the clock back in agriculture than in industry. Capitalism has already invaded the Italian countryside. 'Individual, privately owned peasant plots can never reach the level of productivity needed to sustain a challenge with other sectors and with foreign agriculture.'³¹ The only solution is a breakthrough *forwards* into collectives, not backwards into private plots (PCI support for private plots anyway coincides dangerously with Catholic ideological positions on private property). The crucial point is that the overall context is determined by the development of capitalism, and that therefore an 'anti-monopoly struggle' of the kind preached by Amendola can only be a rearguard action.

The internal contradictions of PCI policy on agriculture in Southern Italy are well brought out by Tarrow,³² who demonstrates convincingly that there is a direct contradiction between a broad front policy in the South and a fight for the interests of the exploited strata. As in the North, offers to include the middle strata within the party fold have been counter-productive: they have refused, while the offer has simply demobilized the proletariat.³³ The emphasis on land *ownership* is so strong that the party has refused to support production co-operatives in the South. Absentee landlords (admittedly small ones) have been told they are welcome in the alliance. Not only has Gramsci's notion of alliance been stretched beyond its limits, but, much more important, Gramsci's *method* has been abandoned. Rather than a broadening alliance strengthening the power of the exploited strata, the form that these alliances have taken now demonstrably reduces it. This is declining rather than ascending integration. Yet Southern Italy is a living confirmation of the lesson of the 18th *Brunaire*: the only alternative to a conservative peasantry is a revolutionary peasantry.

The views of Amendola and his followers, however, represent the thinking behind the practice of the mainstream of the party, and it is within this context that the theories of other members of the party have to be seen. This is particularly true of the situation since the 11th PCI Congress in January 1966. Since that date there has been a noticeable lull in strategic discussion inside the PCI. However, it is perhaps worth giving some additional pointers to the approach of the Left³⁴ within

redditi e programmazione, Critica Marxista 1, 1964, p. 56, he suggests that one of the advantages of a different kind of planning system would be to enable some of the workers to save more and thus aid investment.

³¹ Libertini, *Capitalismo moderno e classe operaia*, Rome, 1965, p. 297.

³² Sidney G. Tarrow, *op. cit.*

³³ Dogan, *op. cit.*, estimates that the PCI got about 37 per cent of the industrial working-class vote in Piedmont and Lombardy in the 1958 general elections. It is much more important for the PCI to go after the roughly two-thirds of the industrial workers who do not support them than it is to try and win over social groups further and further to the right. The objective of winning over non-proletarian support should be to convert these strata to the goals of the proletariat; whereas the result now is often to look for the lowest common class denominator.

³⁴ It should be noted that 'right' and 'left' have nothing to do with the international split. In its most direct comment on PCI policy (*Kommunist* article reprinted in *Rinascita*, No. 5, 1965), the CPSU came down heavily against Amendola for his suggestion that Communism, along with social democracy, had had its day.

the PCI, as it was expressed politically by Ingrao up to the time of the 11th Congress.

The first obvious difference was a much greater stress on *class* unity, as opposed to a party-political front with the PSI which has moved to the right. Thus, on the question of policy in the trade unions, the Left has stressed that the CGIL could and should maintain its existing force on the basis of its membership by pursuing a correct industrial policy, and not by an empty form of unity with right-wing trade-union leaders. Politically, Ingrao stressed that the No. 1 objective of the PCI should be to subtract the DC's working-class and peasant base, rather than to make deals with the Christian Democrat leadership (though as head of the PCI parliamentary group Ingrao has shown considerable skill in exploiting fissures between the DC factions on specific issues such as the Middle East).

The second difference was a much greater emphasis on using the real existing strength of the Communist Party, which is a powerful force in the nation's life. Constant stress on this produced a much more aggressive outlook, exemplified in Ingrao's speech at the 11th Congress. Whereas the Amendola strategy depends very much on assembling the strata *excluded* by modern capitalism, the Left's vision set out the vital importance of organizing not only a majority *but a strategic majority*. The proletariat was valorized by Marx not only or even primarily because it was exploited, but also because of its central position in the productive process—and hence its ability to transform society with a revolution and administer it afterwards. It is now a truism that there is no direct correlation between exploitation and radicalization, but the strategic location of a given class in the productive process is still a fundamental of any Marxist policy. Conditions in Italy are such that any revolution will have to be the work of a majority of the population, but it can only be the work of a strategic majority. This is the problem Magri evokes when he says: 'How then is it possible to go on banking on a bloc of forces formed on the basis of a minimum and short-term programme; on a mass movement which solicits excluded interests rather than selecting and organizing these interests; on a solution at a purely governmental level which has no cohesion, no force and none of the ideas needed for a general programme to transform society?'³⁵

It was no accident that the PCI criticism of the original Centre-Left projects was extremely muted. Both PSI and PCI underestimated the system's ability to reform itself according to its own priorities. There was insufficient appreciation of the different levels at which this opera-

³⁵ Magri, *op. cit.* The kind of programme the PCI proposes is shown by Novella, the head of the CGIL. 'It is extremely important that the programme of the new majority should not have anything in it which explicitly or implicitly indicates that socialist solutions are inevitable . . . We Communists are convinced that the realization of a coherently democratic kind of economic development opens up the necessity of socialist solutions, but this conviction cannot and must not make us fall into positions which are ultimately substantially propagandist' (Answer to 6 *domande su riforme e riformismo* in *Critica marxista* 5-6, 1965).

tion could be performed³⁶ (the government and its programme merely serving as political cover). There was overestimation of formal State power: Nenni's desire to get into the control room was matched by an implicit PCI endorsement for the 'two-stage State reform' theory. In general, too much hope was placed in formal institutions such as the regions, local planning boards—even parliament.³⁷

Conclusions

In his article on capitalism and structural reform Togliatti raised the question: what structural reforms have there been in Italy? 'The "miracle" did not produce any change in the basic social structures . . . What progress there has been (more women finding work, more equal pay, less unemployment) cannot be considered secure . . . Electricity was nationalized, but under such conditions as to exhaust the country's economy for several years. The creation of a vast public sector is undoubtedly a new and important phenomenon, but so far it has not managed to modify the process of accumulation . . . It has not been able to challenge the laws of the private sector. . . . The only true structural reforms are whatever wage increases the trade-union movement has been able to win.' Togliatti was not very optimistic. In particular he was aware of the extreme difficulty of any socialist use of the 'public sector'. The nationalization of electricity was a textbook example of a 'structural reform' completely captured by capitalism.

The Centre-Left has, of course, not implemented a single anti-capitalist structural reform in practice. In the short run the programme was a means to capture the PSI; in the long run it does perhaps represent some modernizations necessary to the capitalist class. Not only was the Centre-Left programme self-evidently conservative, it should also have been obvious that the PSI had neither the will nor the strength to turn any potential reforms in a progressive direction (hence the error of the 'special kind' of opposition, which was based on this miscalculation). The Left of the PSI which broke away to form the PSIUP saw this much more clearly (or at least expressed it more clearly) than the PCI.

The 1968 election demonstrated the failure of the Centre-Left to capture a sizeable sector of the working class. Even though the Centre-Left retained a formal majority, it could not automatically reconstitute a coalition government. This bears testimony to the marxist culture of the Italian proletariat. What is uncertain now is the extent to which the PCI and the CGIL adequately represent the new forces in the society. The

³⁶ This was concretized in the two variant assessments of the Centre-Left: the Right assessing it a failure (because it did not carry out the reforms it had 'promised'); the Left assessing it a success because it had achieved its essential goal (the political encapsulation of the PSI and the reestablishment of the régime on a sounder basis) without having to make most of the concessions in the programme.

³⁷ In an editorial in *Rinascita* (*Congiuntura e politica*, February 29th, 1964), Amendola described parliament as 'the natural place' for the party to discuss the economic situation. 'Parliament is the place where political discussion must be held, in the light of day, between governing majority and opposition, allowing each to assume their responsibilities before the country.' The drift is evident.

same groups as in France—young workers and students—have been operating largely outside existing organizations. PCI willingness to cooperate with groups inside the PSU has yet to be matched by active understanding of powerful new forces at work in the society. As Togliatti pointed out in *Capitalism and Structural Reforms*, it has been the struggle of the working class which has brought about the only important positive change in post-war Italy. The precondition of further progress is not political compromise but an aggressive attack on capitalism and all its agents.

The attack must be at all levels. The allegiance of every class is split between different parties. All parties are inter-class. A policy of alliances is complicated by the fact that it involves both strategic alliances with other classes and tactical and strategical alliances with other parties. The trouble is that the class situation can not be sorted out without, to some extent, going through the existing political formations. In a curious way, the DC is the Gramscian party in reverse: within itself a multi-class bloc with a definite hegemonic class, and the dominant party in a multi-party coalition. Its success is testimony to the power of ideology, the only counter to which is political education. This is why Italy is really a test case now. Can a strong party, with a big membership, with a real Marxist culture, with political experience, with prestige ensure not merely the protection of the proletariat's interests but the triumph of their ideals?

Canton:

March-May 1968

John Collier

From the Zhongda Cultural Revolutionary Front

Since December everyday life in Canton has been normal, except in two respects. Firstly, there was an almost total lack of rain from early August until about a month ago. This did not adversely affect the autumn harvest, which was excellent, but reduced the water levels of the reservoirs—resulting in electricity cuts and some short-time working. Secondly, as many people did not get home for the Spring Festival last year, and this is China's traditional time for family reunion, there was a tremendous coming and going in and out of Canton, which overloaded the transport facilities.

Two activities have dominated the Cultural Revolution front, both aimed at forming or consolidating the new unity. Firstly, there have been negotiations between the leaders of the competing organizations in order to form alliances leading to three-way committees (leaders of rebellious masses, revolutionary cadres, and representatives of the Peoples Liberation Army—PLA). Secondly, there have been many study courses in Mao Tse-tung's thought for *dou si pi sin* ('combating self, and criticizing revisionism').

Negotiations here in Zhongda have taken several forms: direct bilateral talks; the same, with the presence of members of the PLA unit staying here in the university; talks involving and under the auspices of the provisional provincial leading group (one, when the chairman of the committee took part, went on until 2 o'clock in the morning). There were two main stumbling blocks. The Red Flag Commune (RFC) and the quite small but very militant August 31st Fighting Group, which are closely allied, insist that they both be represented on the new committee, while the Rebellious Committee (RC) insist that only they and the RFC be recognized. They also disagreed about the number of representatives that each side, or the three organizations, should have on the new committee. At the time of writing, the second

of these differences has been removed, by both sides saying they do not mind how many representatives the other has. Further, following a meeting this morning at which representatives from a nearby art college reported on how they overcame a similar *impasse*—by self-criticism and reaching the point where they were prepared to accept the proposals of the other side—our last obstacle is probably being overcome at this very minute.

We have not been taking part in the group discussions, presumably because it was felt that our presence might inhibit full self-criticism, but we have been told about several of these 'short courses'. A RFC teacher friend described a two-week course that he attended, as follows:

'We met three times a day for a total of about 8 hours. Sometimes the evening session went on till very late as we were so interested in the discussion. We commenced by reviewing the national and international situation. Then we discussed the local situation, and finally our situation here in Zhongda. In discussing the situation in Zhongda we put the main emphasis on self-criticism, and getting a clear idea of where we had made mistakes, due to petit-bourgeois and bourgeois small-group mentality and individual selfishness.'

This course was one organized for a selected group of students and teachers of the RFC. Following this, groups were organized for all the members of the RFC, to each of which one or two PLA men were invited. These courses have just come to an end and are being followed by mixed groups from both sides. In the language department, the situation is made difficult by the fact that the RFC is in a great majority. The mixed groups have been held first in the physics department, where the two sides are more evenly matched.

The turning-point here was on February 15th when, at a meeting called and presided over by the PLA, the leaders of our three main organizations for the first time made a number of serious self-criticisms, the major aspect of which was that they had put the interests of their own organizations before the advancement of the Cultural Revolution. They admitted that they had at various times pointed their spearheads at the PLA; that they had emphasized the errors of the other side, and refused to admit their achievements; that they had resorted to physical violence and so on.

Our new provincial and municipal committees were set up on February 21st, after almost all the counties had formed their own united committees. Now, Zhongda is the last college in Canton without an alliance. March 6th, 1968.

Postscript. After a couple of days of intense discussion and negotiation (and one agreement over-ruled by the rank-and-file of the RFC), the three organizations here formed an alliance. The Rebellious Committee (forming one side) has thirteen representatives; the Red Flag Commune (having an overall majority of members) has ten, and the August

31st Fighting Group (comparatively small membership) has three. Thus, the 'two sides' aspect has been partially recognized, favouring the RCE and the 'three organizations' aspect has been partially recognized, favouring the other two organizations.

The most significant thing to note is that although the RFC contained three quarters of all students and teachers, had the moral support (as being the most left organization) of the PLA group, the provincial and municipal authority, and to a lesser extent the Central Committee, and had put forward very reasonable terms for forming an alliance in October last, yet five months of negotiation and discussion have taken place in order to ensure a genuine alliance. And this is only the first organizational step towards a three-way organ of power—our provisional university committee, which will include representatives of the workers' organizations and the leading cadres. The immediate aim now is to 'level the mountains'—that is to bring about an ideological unity of all the students and teachers.

The alliance agreement was signed at 3.0 a.m. on March 7th, 1968!

Relations between Party, People's Liberation Army and Cultural Revolutionary Organizations

The PLA is the physical power of the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Chairman Mao puts it, 'Without the people's army, the people have nothing'.

In 1954 the PLA was reorganized on the model of the Soviet Red Army, and the egalitarian relationship between officers and men was discarded; but the PLA continued to carry out great social tasks such as land reclamation, road building, and assistance to those suffering drought or flood. In 1959 Peng Te-huai, who emphasized the over-riding importance of modern weapons, was replaced as commander-in-chief by Lin Biao. Lin Biao developed the study of Chairman Mao's works in the army, and set about rekindling the old political tradition of the PLA. In 1964 salaries were reduced to the civilian level, uniforms were made uniform, and the division between officers and men was attacked generally. The PLA is recruited overwhelmingly from the poor peasants, and to a lesser extent from the workers. Thus its class composition emphasizes the unity of workers and peasants, and, less directly, the class struggle against bourgeois and landlord elements.

The role of the PLA in the Cultural Revolution has been complex. Firstly, the Central Committee has emphasized that the PLA is the main bulwark of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and will act where necessary to protect that dictatorship. But at the same time it has been emphasized that the Cultural Revolution means not only regaining power from those in authority who are taking the capitalist road, but also transforming the consciousness of the whole people to bring it more into conformity with the socialist economic base. Thus physical violence has been condemned, and argument and discussion encouraged. The main involvement of the PLA in the movement has been: to hold the ring; to propagate Mao Tse-tung's thought; and to set an example in serving the people. During the worst period of fighting here in



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Canton the PLA men went about unarmed, and when skirmishes broke out they went into the thick of the trouble as peacemakers. Most of the heroes praised throughout the country in the last two years have been PLA men who gave their lives while saving the lives of others, and who before their deaths were known for their selfless hard work and generous behaviour.

When the Red Guard movement got under way, they were encouraged to model themselves on the PLA and revive the traditions of dedication and simple living of the old Red Army.

It is probably reasonably accurate to say that since the 1959 meeting of the Central Committee there have been two 'headquarters' in the Party, although at each meeting of the Central Committee the line of Chairman Mao was agreed upon. Probably again it is a reasonable generalization to say that when the movement in the colleges and schools was launched the Left dominated in the PLA, and the Right dominated organization in other sectors. However, in the villages power was predominantly in the hands of the poor peasants' associations which had been re-established during the Socialist Education movement, which began in 1964 and overlapped with the Cultural Revolution.

During the first phase of the Cultural Revolution—the first weeks of June 1966—there was a certain amount of rebellion and confusion, but the Party held the reins organizationally. With the operation of work teams up to the meeting of the Central Committee in July-August, the Party organization clamped down on the rebels, who only to a very small degree at that time had any organization. After July, the Red Guard organizations grew, and those in the groups gradually developed a sort of autonomy. Most followed fairly closely the lead given by the 16 Point Decision of the Central Committee and subsequent editorials in People's Daily and Red Flag; some came to a greater or lesser degree under the guidance of the Right.

After August, the Central Committee and the other national leading groups controlled the PLA directly, but gradually their control of other sectors became more indirect as lower levels of the Party ceased to function. In December the general attack on those in authority taking the capitalist road developed, and after the 'January Revolution' in Shanghai, power was largely in the hands of mass organizations or the PLA. However, as most leading personnel in the country are members of the Party, and most of these people carried on with their technical and administrative work—this is proved by the extraordinary degree to which the whole day-to-day life of the country carried on normally—throughout the last two years Party members, if not party organization, have kept working.

The main collision between Party Committees and mass organizations therefore took place in December 1966 and January 1967. Sometimes, of course, the Party Committees supported the rebels; sometimes only a rump operated, the majority having retired from active committee work; sometimes the committee operated from behind the scenes through a mass organization (this happened a lot in Shanghai).

During the main period of rousing the Red Guards in the autumn of 1966, the Party, except for the Central Committee, was de-emphasized; but since the January Revolution the prestige of the Party has gradually been re-emphasized, and certainly in our experience here those who are in the Party are looked to for leadership in their organizations.

I think the Party in Shanghai is again operating to some extent. One of the main aims laid down for 1968 is the rectification of the Party, and the adoption of a correct line in Party building. This will include a vast amount of detailed investigation, a great deal of criticism and self-criticism, and the eventual assessment of all leading Party members. A small number will be expelled from the Party, a considerable number will be severely criticized, and a large number of young people who have won mass support in the Cultural Revolution will be accepted into the Party.

After the Cultural Revolution it is generally thought—and this is confirmed by the 16 Points—that the mass organizations will in one form or another be maintained. As far as I can find out, in the PLA the Party has continued to function throughout at all levels from the unit branch upwards.

Here in Canton, the old Party committees maintained control more or less until January 1967. In January and February there were various degrees of mass organization control. In February a military commission took over the supervision of the administration of the province and the city. In September a provisional leading group was set up by the Central Committee after prolonged discussions in Peking with representatives from the province, and this was finally replaced by our provisional provincial committee on February 21st 1968. This committee includes representatives of the mass organizations, the leading Party cadres, and PLA cadres, as is the case with all provisional organs of power.

Groups of PLA men have been here in the university for over a year now. At different times they have supported different sides, and since September last they have supported movements towards unity of both sides. Throughout the whole period their main emphasis has been on promoting the study of, and applying, Mao Tse-tung's thought, and encouraging both sides to settle problems by discussion.

Both in the factory where we worked for three months, and in a village where we harvested last summer, there were groups of PLA men. In the factory the group of about six—the factory had two thousand workers—concentrated on encouraging the study of Mao Tse-tung's works while taking part in work in the different workshops. In the village the group of about twenty, including three officers and a nurse, concentrated mainly on setting a good example in hard work, and also took part in study meetings. They also cut the childrens' hair, did some first aid work, and one night when a typhoon blew up went around the houses to see if they could help with damaged roofs.

At a cement factory I visited specifically to interview rebel workers, a

PLA man joined in the interview. (Again there were six soldiers in a large plant). The PLA comrade explained that they worked closely with the rebel workers, but also took part in discussions with groups of the opposing side. I asked, 'Do you get regular instructions from your PLA unit?' He answered, 'Chairman Mao teaches us to be self-reliant. We are here to propagate Chairman Mao's thinking, and support the Left; why should we need instructions?' I: 'But what happens if you come upon a problem you cannot solve—do you refer to your superior officers?' He; 'We are all Party members. We have constituted ourselves a Party branch. We discuss the problem, and if we are stuck we confer with the workers, make further investigations, and study harder Chairman Mao's thinking. With the help of Mao Tse-tung's thought there are no problems that cannot be solved.'

Discussion within the Revolutionary Groups

We attended discussion groups—mostly teachers' groups, but also several students' groups—during the summer of last year. This was the period when the struggle between the opposing groups was at its height. These discussions included the following topics: The nature of the opposing organization—was it conservative or genuinely revolutionary? If it was conservative, was it merely misguided or was it being manipulated by reactionary forces? To what extent should 'our' side be prepared to co-operate with the opposing side? (The only joint activity over several months was a mass meeting to denounce the us-instigated Israeli war with the Arab countries, and British oppression in Hong Kong). What was the correct assessment of a leading cadre who was supporting 'our' side and being struggled against by the other side? To what extent should subject study be recommenced? How could the old isolation of the senior staff from the students be broken down and comradely relations of equality be established? And all manner of other questions concerning content and methods of teaching.

From April 1967 to January 1968 the deadlock over this leading cadre, and vacillations over the assessment of the opposing organization, inhibited progress in general. But it is now clear that these endless discussions were in fact gradually preparing the minds of the students and teachers for the stage of self-criticism and unification, because during this period all the sectional selfish interests were expressed which now are being brought out into the open.

The one consistent theme throughout the whole Cultural Revolution is expressed in the 'Three Most Read Articles': 'Serve the People', 'The Foolish old Man Who Removed the Mountains' and 'In Memory of Norman Bethune'. The first says simply: No matter what your work, if you are prepared to learn and correct your mistakes, and you are dedicated to the people, and keep your eyes on the bright future, then your life is worthwhile. The second says the same, but emphasizes that in the last resort our highest allegiance is to proletarian internationalism. The third emphasizes that history is made by the masses, and development takes place through class struggle—that if we apply ourselves tirelessly to the major concrete problems in hand we are allied to the great mass of mankind, and to the Chinese people.

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Most discussion therefore has had three dimensions: 1) Mao Tse-tung's thought—the general orientation; 2) the struggle between the two lines, whose focus has varied as the revolution has developed; 3) the struggle of sectional interests, which has varied mainly as between different sections of the people—the students, the workers, the peasants, and others.

Specific strategic guidance has been given by Chairman Mao's periodic short pronouncements, such as his poster in August 1966: 'Bombard the Headquarters!' his support of the 'January Revolution' in Shanghai in 1967, his unity pronouncement in August 1967, and the 'transformation' New Year directive this January. Tactical guidance has been given nationally by the editorials of People's Daily, Red Flag and PLA Daily, and supplemented locally with the use of all kinds of messages, meetings, and personal interventions, as when Premier Chou came to Canton in April 1967, and in August went to Wuhan.

Material to feed the discussion that centred around this general guidance—which has been carefully restrained to abide by the principle of 'allowing the masses to liberate themselves'—has included the following: articles covering the rightist policies of Liu Shao-chi and others in relation to education, art and literature, industry, agriculture, Party building, and foreign policy; the showing of representative reactionary films, revolutionary films and new revolutionary operas, etc.; the publication of Marxist classics by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; meetings held with delegations from other countries, particularly from Vietnam and Albania; rallies in support of Vietnam, the Hong Kong workers, the Arab countries, overseas Chinese in Indonesia; material mainly in the form of articles and personal reports showing how representative problems were solved in particular units; reports of the self-sacrifice of particular individuals in their efforts to serve the people—nearly all of them rank-and-file PLA men, peasants, workers, or revolutionary low-level cadres; a vast amount of investigation carried out by particular organizations; experience of working in other units—in the main that of students, teachers and office workers working on farms and in factories; material on the divergent policies of China and the Soviet Union—in particular the 'Nine Comments on the Open Letter of the CPSU'; a vast flow of posters and mimeographed sheets containing everything from slogans to long articles, from trivial local news to vital national news, from personal attacks to well-reasoned and factually substantiated criticism, from individual comment to policy statements of large organizations, and put up by everyone from young school children to members of the Central Committee.

For the last year and more nearly all meetings, whether mass meetings or small group meetings, have commenced with 'quotations' related to the matter in hand, and many discussion meetings are preceded by individual study either of selected articles of Chairman Mao, or editorials from the national press. The best indication of the importance of Mao Tse-tung's thought in the whole movement are the figures giving the quantities of his works published in 1967: Selected Works—86 million; Quotations—350 million; Selected Readings—48 million; Poems—57 million. Besides this, many complete articles such as 'On the Correct

Handling of Contradictions Among the People' have been printed in the press. So great was the prestige of Chairman Mao in 1966, and so deeply committed to his overall guidance was the leadership of the Communist Party, that from the start of the Cultural Revolution the whole struggle has been carried out in terms of his formulations.

Since its issue, the most authoritative document has been the 16 point decision of the Central Committee meeting of August 1966, and this has been constantly taken as a basic reference in discussion.

No one can know what has been discussed throughout China in these last two years, for even another group in your own unit may be discussing quite different subjects to your group. The leaders of an organization might instruct its constituent groups to discuss one question, but the group meeting might often move to an entirely different topic. For a considerable period here, no matter what a group meeting was called to discuss, the discussion turned to the impasse between the two main organizations. The idea of free discussion was so dominant that no chairman in our experience ever, more than very tentatively, tried to call a meeting to order—whether it was a matter of relevance, or one of several people talking at the same time.

The general concept that social change starts from the material, and passes through political and ideological stages before becoming theoretical, when it can be applied organizationally, is very relevant to grasping the overall nature of the discussions that have been such a vital part of the Cultural Revolution. That these 'stages' are also simultaneous 'aspects' of the developing situation, does not invalidate this concept. The transformation of private industry and trade, the collectivization of agriculture, and the transformation of the social structure of the intelligentsia through the recruitment of worker and peasant youth for advanced education and training, gave rise to the political polarization. The political struggle, developing particularly from 1957-8 when these transformations were largely completed, led to the struggle for power of 1966-7. During this period, whatever the form discussion might take, the dynamic of it was sectional political interest. Power having been substantially won by the Left, the movement towards unity became the major dynamic in discussion. With the setting up of united organs of power—the present phase—ideological unity is the dynamic, and the aim Party rectification and the raising of the ideological consciousness of the whole people. This will include the transformation of education, and culminate organizationally in nationwide elections, both in the Party, in state organs, and in mass organizations. All this will again lead to a new 'great leap forward' in production, and a resulting change in the relations of production. Unless one keeps in mind the dual aspect of development—that on the one hand there is only one organic movement with its various aspects at all times inter-related, yet on the other hand at any given time one aspect tends to be dominant, and each aspect has its own inner mode of development—an overall understanding is impossible.

Zhongda: Ten Weeks Later

In late March the movement towards unity in the university was re-

placed by a new period of intensified controversy. The general explanation for this would seem to be that the rightists have reacted to the movement for establishing alliances and three-way committees by: 1) Seizing on the self-criticism of the revolutionary rebels in order to try to negate the achievements of the Cultural Revolution; 2) taking advantage of the general atmosphere of rapprochement between the previously hostile mass organizations, to try and rehabilitate people who had been removed; 3) attempting to infiltrate into the new committees.

The actual struggle here seems to be taking the following form. The two sides have more or less broken off their dialogue, and to a considerable extent separated physically—many of the RC students in our department have left their dormitories. Both sides have intensified their activity of exposing those who previously belonged to the Kuomintang, and both sides suspect the other of being influenced by reactionary forces operating in the background. There is an intense 'battle' by poster and loudspeaker; fortunately we are good sleepers, for the loudspeakers sometimes continue at full volume into the early hours!

Eight colleges in Kwangtung have formed their revolutionary three-way committees, and the effective administration of the new provincial and municipal committees is evidenced by an improved food supply and by the end of some of the shortages in the shops. Several people from the countryside have given news of successful spring planting and the prospect of another good summer harvest. One person told us that Party rectification had already started in some villages.

Our classes continue in the mornings, although many students do not attend as they are fully engaged in Cultural Revolution activity. We have attended two meetings of the RFC in the last month—one to celebrate Chairman Mao's statement of May 7th 1967 on reforming education, and the other to support the struggles of the French workers and students. The students and young teachers are very excited by the news from France, and full of admiration for those taking part. We paid three visits to the Spring Trade Fair, and had a long talk with a British trade representative. A number of new commodities were on show, notably new machine tools and scientific instruments. Once a week we have a discussion group with two members of the staff of the president's office and two young teachers of English, both from poor peasant families. We have carried out a review of the whole course of the Cultural Revolution, discussed Chairman Mao's leadership of the Chinese revolution, and tried to analyse the meaning of many of the new formulations that have arisen in the movement. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of these discussions is the marked degree with which we are in agreement both concerning the nature of the struggle and on the details of the course it has taken.

One thing that is important to realize is that the differences between the RFC and the RC at Zhongda are not expressed programmatically, since neither has a programme. This raises an important point. A revolution is first and last a struggle for power. Socially, this means state power: ideologically, this means the power of ideas over the minds of men. On both sides of the struggle there are non-antagonistic contradictions. The

whole strategy and tactics of revolution might be summed up in this way: 'Promote the contradictions among your enemies, and temporarily negate the contradictions on your own side by keeping the focus on the enemy and the contradictions between you and them.'

The bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideas in the minds of the masses are the enemy in the Cultural Revolution. Firstly the masses must be roused, and power seized from the capitalist roaders (the bourgeoisie); then follows the ideological struggle, against the revisionism of the capitalist roaders (bourgeois ideas and practice) and against bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideas in our own minds; this is summed up in the four characters *Dou si ji sin* ("Combat self and criticize revisionism").

To produce a programme requires that the contradictions among the people be discussed and given a temporary solution. This can only be done satisfactorily on the basis of unity, and if embarked on prematurely will certainly weaken the class struggle through focusing on sectional interests. As an example of avoiding sectional contradictions, all salaries and wages are frozen for the duration of the Cultural Revolution. A worker who sits on a provincial revolutionary committee receives only his pre-Cultural Revolution wage. A cadre who has been removed, and does no work, is likewise paid his full salary.

May 29th, 1968

work

'Because I'm interested in trade union work, I think it makes me more interested in the overall running of a railway,' writes this London Transport underground guard. B.W. is secretary of his local NUR branch, and a delegate to the sectional council which deals with the LTB management. Convinced that the 'membership is the union', convinced that in an industry determined by politics political issues must be confronted, he faces the problem both of involving members in union work and of raising the political issues involved.

Guard Underground

After 21 years as a guard and active trade unionist on the London underground, I can say that I enjoy being a railwayman. I started before the war when London Transport Board used to take on temporary staff for the annual leave season, and I became a temporary porter. I was 23 then. If you kept your nose clean, were good at the job and, most important, a regular attender, there was a chance come the end of the summer that you'd be kept on to replace men who were retiring. I was lucky to be kept on in my first year because I knew others who were temporaries for as long as five or six years. In those days work on London Transport was regarded as a job for life, it was one of the few places where there was any security.

Seniority counts for a great deal in the LTB, and during the war they allowed time in the services to stand as seniority; by the end of the war I had enough seniority to go up for guard. It's through seniority that you progress from porter to guard to motorman in the LTB. To become a motorman you have to have done six months as a guard; and to pass out as a guard you have to be an emergency motorman, so that you can assist the driver in case of breakdown and drive the train from the back portion if necessary. The underground is very congested, and a railway is not like the buses where you can drive around an obstruction. After

six months as a guard I could have put up as a motorman but by then I had become active in the NUR. There is an agreement whereby a man can refuse to go forward, and his refusal is noted so that at a later date he can still go forward if he wishes, and that's what I did.

Driving a tube train is a responsible job and requires a lot of concentration. There is a highly complex signalling system. It seemed to me that at the back of the train—between stations at least—I could think about things which I wouldn't like to be worrying about if I were a motorman.

I've been secretary of my local NUR branch since 1953 and I'm now on my second three-year term as elected delegate to the sectional council which deals with trainmen's matters with the LTB management. Because I'm interested in trade union work I think it makes me more interested in the overall running of a railway. The majority of railwaymen are very conscientious about their work, but obviously this concerns mainly their own particular job. On the other hand, as an active union man, I've become interested in the sort of transport system London gets as a whole.

Although it involves unusual hours and shift work (except for Christmas railwaymen don't worry much about bank holidays, and Sunday work is part of the job), I find the job interesting. For a start there's the variety of the hours. At some depots you can do a different turn every week of the year; at Barking, my depot, we do a 36-week rota, with every week different. I couldn't face working regular factory hours again, as I did for eight years in a series of radio factories before joining LTB. It's true that some men are affected by the shift work, the weekly changes in eating and sleeping, and it's one of the reasons why it's difficult to recruit staff. I suppose I'm lucky that it doesn't affect me. Then there's the variety of the run itself. On the District Line we're fortunate to have a lot of open work, and then the run can be from Upminster to Ealing or Richmond or Wimbledon, which is variety again. In a run of about 1 hour 35 minutes, only about 25 minutes is tunnel work. People often ask me how I can stand the noise, but you don't seem to notice it on my line, though when I travel on the tube lines as a passenger I do.

This isn't to say that the actual job of opening and shutting the doors isn't monotonous; but all repetitive jobs become that. But there are a whole lot of things around that divert and interest you, especially coming into contact with the public. In the pre-war days, the guard's compartment used to be completely shut off from the passengers, but now it's usually separated only by a barrier which you lower, so you're in full view of the public. But what's most important is the fact of being your own governor, and working with the motorman as a crew.

Like the driver and fireman on the mainline railway, the motorman and guard on LTB work as a crew, together for as long as 20 or 30 years sometimes. Co-operation between the two is very important. If you had a breakdown in a tunnel with 700 or 800 passengers on the

it's essential that the driver and guard work together as a team. Everyone has read about incidents like this, when there has been arcing or smouldering (LRB men never use the word fire) and passengers have had to be de-trained. The guard and motorman have to give the passengers the impression of being in charge of the train. Of course, you can't de-train passengers without special instructions, without the juice being switched off. I've been lucky in my time because I can remember only three or four occasions in which I've had to deal with incidents. But then on the District Line we've got a double track and open stations, which is far more reassuring for passengers who can see daylight.

On the LRB it's the guard who is responsible for the train, although the driver is senior and has the more responsible job. The guard has to report any breakdowns, defects, untoward incidents involving signals, passengers or anything that affects the train's running, and inquiries about the train are supposed to be made of him.

If you're on the early turn, starting at 4.30 a.m., say, you go with the motorman to the sidings to prepare the train. You get seven minutes for booking on (we don't clock in) and to read any new notices or instructions, then 16 minutes to walk down to the depot, to get the train ready for coming into service. All these times have been agreed with the union. There's a certain routine that has got to be gone through in preparing the train: labelling the train up (putting up the destinations), testing doors, opening them so many times on one side and then on the other, testing lights and the telephone between the front and the back. Then you walk through the train with the doors open because once in a while it has happened that some doors have stayed shut at a station but your indicator light comes on because the others are open. The last test is of the brakes, to ensure continuity of braking from the back to the front of the train. Then the guard makes out a journal with the car numbers, train number, time of leaving the depot, and signs a certificate about the brake test on the back.

Then you're ready for coming into service. We work eight hours, including a meal break which by negotiation with the union is 30 minutes plus a certain number of minutes added on for the time taken from leaving the train to reaching the eating place, nowadays usually a canteen. This is a minimum of three minutes but in some places can be seven or nine minutes.

So we may work four hours on the 'first bit' in railwaymen's jargon then have a meal break, and end up with a second bit of 3 hours 10 minutes. This doesn't mean that you're always on long runs; you can have duties of short runs with five or six different trains in a shift. The duty sheets which are made up at LRB head office on the basis of the timetables sometimes require crews to fill in on short stretches, take trains to sidings and that sort of thing.

To start work at 4.30 a.m., I have to get up an hour earlier, and at that time in the morning I don't feel much like breakfast. As soon as I get to the depot I make a can of tea—we always carry cans with us—and share it with my motorman. Then, during a breakfast stop, the motor

man will brew up his can which he'll share with me. Railwaymen have a thing about tea on the road. On my line the LRB provides several spots with tea-making facilities—by that I mean hot water—and we can nip in and get a can, so before we start the trip we decide where we'll stop, and then I make tea on the train. I call up my motorman on the telephone and tell him tea's up, and at the next stop take it up to him in front. Of course, you can only do this at quiet stations; it wouldn't happen at Oxford Circus.

Technically, the LRB system is very good. The signalling in particular is amazing. In the peak periods Charing Cross handles a train every 90 seconds, and it requires a highly efficient system to manage that. Where before three or four signal boxes were needed to control an area, there's now one regulating room with a man in front of a push-button console who can watch train movements and signals on a visual diagram and control the whole area. Part of the signalling is automatic and works on a time system. The passage of a train turns the signal to red and sends up a trip arm which, if another train passes, catches a trip on the train and automatically applies the brakes.

The progress made on automatic trains in the three years that they've been tried out on the Hainault-Woodford stretch is very good. These trains, which are going to be used on the Victoria Line, are electronically controlled and carry only an automatic-train operator, as he's now called. The operator is there in case the train breaks down, when it can be driven manually, to open and close doors and to keep observation, because they haven't devised anything yet that could stop people stepping onto the track. They have even been able to insert permanent speed restrictions into the track where the train slows itself down and picks up again at the end of the section.

The introduction of these trains was being raised just about the time I was first elected to the sectional council, and we had to face up to it that you can't stop progress. We've ridden on the trains and we know it's an excellent system. What we've got to see is that people who get the job of automatic-train operator are paid adequate rates, and that those affected—like guards who aren't required—are properly taken care of.

Because of the amount of time taken up on sectional council work, I don't do very many duties as a guard any longer. There are four sectional councils on LRB (for supervisory staff, booking staff, trainmen and station staff), and I am on the trainmen's council. We deal with the interpretation and application of agreements made at head office level between the NUR and LRB. Each item that we take up must have already been put forward to the LRB management by the secretary of a union branch in writing and not have received satisfaction. For example, we deal with complaints that a man or group of men is not being correctly paid; we don't deal with rates of pay which are negotiated at head office level. The agreement to run automatic trains, the wage rates and who should qualify for the job was all decided between head offices, but we had to decide what would happen to the guards affected, seeing the new job was advertised properly, and going through the draft

train, regulations governing the running of the new trains.

On paper the machinery of the sectional councils looks all right, but it doesn't work out that way in practice. Although we discuss with people at a level of some importance, they seem to have very little power to settle cases at our level. The chairman of our council is the General Superintendent of Staff and Training, and above him on the operating side there are only the Assistant Operating Manager and the Operating Manager before you get to the Board which runs all London transport.

When we're dealing with items which seem to be within the orbit of his decision-making responsibilities, and even more in cases which we appreciate he can't personally settle, we seem to grind on waiting for 'someone upstairs' to take a decision. It's very frustrating. Sometime I'd prefer the management to give a flat no straightaway because there are higher stages that the case can be taken to. We can meet the Assistant or the Operating Manager, and if that still brings no results we can take it up at NUR head office level. It often happens that the management side in the sectional council says they will look at a new item we've put on the agenda. Two months later, at the next full council meeting, they come back saying there's something they want to ask, and two months later they say they'll set up a joint sub-committee to look into it—and so it goes on. Bearing in mind that management has prior knowledge of all items on the agenda since the matter has first been raised in correspondence by a branch secretary with management, these delays must be seen partly as trying to take the steam out of situations, which is of course to management's advantage. But one has to bear in mind also that LTB is not master of its own affairs as far as finance is concerned; they're responsible to the government, and the delays are connected with that.

I often come to the end of the day or the end of the year and wonder if it's all worthwhile, and then I remember the things that have been achieved. You've got to go on struggling. It has been a constant struggle since the war to try to get railwaymen a decent standard of living which, it's generally accepted I think, they haven't got. LTB provide no end of staff facilities, and they appear to take an interest in all sorts of benevolent funds, social and recreational activities for the staff. But when it comes to wages, that's another thing.

I spend anything between three and five days a week on sectional council work because although there's a full council meeting only once every two months, there are sub-committees meeting almost daily on such matters as annual leave rosters, or on new working methods management wants us to consider. LTB provides a guard for me at the depot so that I can be available for meetings; obviously if I finished at 11 a.m. I wouldn't be expected to be available at 9 a.m. for a meeting. I get the normal guard's money—£14.10.0 basic wage a week, which with the Sunday overtime we have to work brings the money up to about £17, for the duty I would have worked. Unlike most industrial workers, LTB men aren't keen to do more overtime than they have to.

I've always been passionately interested in trade unionism and the

Labour Party. I was born in the east-end of London, and my mother was left a widow at 38 with two boys to bring up on 18s. a week during the depression. You couldn't help being interested if you were at all concerned about the situation then. I was lucky to get a job as a messenger in the city, and later in radio factories where the pay was 4d. an hour and there was work eight months out of the 12. But I didn't really become an active trade unionist until after the war. Before being elected branch secretary I was in turn auditor, collector and vice-chairman of the branch.

I think it's true to say that all the improvements in railwaymen's conditions probably originated in a particular branch, perhaps even with one member. I believe the membership is the union, whatever people say. But at the rank and file level, the branch level, it is the secretary round whom union activity resolves. It is he who has to take up cases brought by members; he's responsible for contributions, for getting new members, for legal and compensation cases; and on disciplinary or accident cases affecting members he will often go with them to the hearings. Members come to regard the secretary as someone they can bring their problems to, problems that might not normally be thought of as within the union orbit like insurance tribunals and domestic problems. Officially, as I've said, a branch secretary can only correspond with management; but as a sectional councillor I've found LTB very accessible and I can go and see officials at head office. Being a branch secretary means having work on the table seven days a week, and it's got to be done in off-duty hours, as well as, in our case, holding a branch meeting every week.

Despite the fact that you don't have to belong to a union in the LTB, and that the men are scattered, there's no problem in recruiting members to the NUR. The problem quite frankly is in getting them interested in union work. The same is true of coloured staff, they'll join the union readily enough, but—in my branch at least which has over 100 coloured members—there's not one who is active. I know of other branches where the situation is different in this respect; but then we don't get the number of active younger people we'd like to see anyway.

Considering the number of coloured people employed by LTB I don't think there's much prejudice. Of course, you have the situation now where there are coloured motormen in a crew with a white guard, and it seems to work pretty well, though I wouldn't deny that there have been cases of prejudice.

As I've said, wage rates are negotiated at head office level. At times branch members do sometimes feel that there's a gap between them and head office, because they don't fully understand the union's set-up. This is true of the NUR in any case, because inside the organization there is certain machinery that can be used by the rank and file. Although all correspondence from head office comes down signed by the General Secretary, if you're not satisfied with the result you can always appeal to the National Executive Council. This is elected from rank and file members who serve a three-year term before returning to their jobs. If the NEC upholds the General Secretary, you can appeal to the Annual

General Meeting, 77 elected rank and file delegates. Quite frankly taking this into account, I believe the machinery is there. But the tragedy, as far as our movement is concerned—and it has to be remembered that there are 1,600 branches in the NUR—is that not enough use it.

During the Selwyn Lloyd wage freeze in 1961 when railwaymen were struggling for a wage increase which everyone seemed to think was justifiable, the press announced that railwaymen would get two and a half per cent sometime in the middle of the year. That was in January. There was talk of strike action, the NEC met, and it was an issue that must have been discussed by every branch. And yet I heard that only 100 odd branches had taken the trouble to express an opinion one way or the other. In my opinion, if we don't get what we want it's the membership's fault.

Of course, we're getting used to this sort of government action now. I find it fantastic that the trade union movement, which is the backbone of the Labour Party, and which worked actively to get it returned to office, should have swallowed the incomes policy and wage freeze. Had it been a Tory government the trade union movement would have been in an uproar. As it is, faced with the dilemma of letting the Tories back in if the Labour government was thrown out, the trade union movement thought it necessary to support the government in its incomes policy first and then the wage freeze. In my view it was wrong in both cases.

My own branch had a resolution opposing the incomes policy at the last Annual General Meeting, which I was asked to second. But later because of the mandates of the 40 to 50 branches I was representing as a delegate, I found myself in the position of having to vote in favour of the incomes policy. At the recall meeting two months later, when clause 4 had been published, I was able to vote against, although the meeting supported the policy by an even greater majority.

What is incredible is that, in an industry determined by politics since the war, it is very difficult to put over to the rank and file the necessity of discussing politics in the branch. Although I agree that the branch shouldn't be dominated by politics because its function is primarily industrial, in my own branch I take a great deal of interest in political issues for which I think time can always be made. But I have a great job to get this over to the members, and unfortunately I think it's going to be faced that it keeps some members away. They say you shouldn't be discussing politics. They make their contributions to the political fund and that's all.

To some extent though there's a realization in my branch that politics has been brought into trade unionism by the wage freeze. For if you ask how it is that a branch or branches accept a wage freeze, you have to reply that it's only because it's being done by a Labour government to that extent it's a political issue. But then every NUR wage claim over the past 14 or 15 years has been turned into a political issue since it is the government which makes the final decision, and almost inevitably at some time or other the union leaders are called to Downing Street.

But the essential difference now is that the natural function of the trade unions—wage negotiations—is being stifled, even if for us railwaymen the end result—two and a half per cent, three per cent—is the same. It's a situation we've been saddled with since nationalization which turned out to be vastly different from what we originally thought it was going to be.

B.W.

Trotsky and the Debate on Socialism in One Country

The object of the present essay is to examine one area of the debate recently engaged in NLR between Nicolas Krassó and Ernest Mandel—the question of ‘Socialism in One Country’. This great historical controversy, waged from the outset in somewhat elusive terms and encrusted today with decades of polemical distortions by both sides, is one where it is particularly important to make an objective and balanced estimate of Trotsky’s position, without any ideological or psychological disposition to ‘vindicate’ one side as against the other.

A serious examination of what Trotsky actually said about building Socialism in Russia reveals a fundamental and unresolved contradiction in his position which does not appear in Mandel’s bowdlerized version of it. On the one hand, as Mandel correctly states, Trotsky never disputed the need to *start* the job of building Socialism, and advanced proposals for an increased rate of economic growth to

this end.¹ Under attack, he denied having a 'pessimistic attitude towards the programme of our work of Socialist construction in the face of the retarded process of revolution in the West', and accepted that 'in spite of all the difficulties arising out of our capitalistic environment, the economic and political resources of the Soviet dictatorship are very great.'² On the other hand he remained tied to the 'two fundamental propositions in the theory of permanent revolution': that although, firstly, 'the revolution can transfer power into the hands of the Russian proletariat before the proletariat of advanced countries is able to attain it,' nonetheless, secondly, the only 'way out of those contradictions which will befall the proletarian dictatorship in a backward country, surrounded by a world of capitalist enemies, will be found on the arena of world revolution'.³

Krassó is right in showing that the primary basis of Trotsky's argument against the possibility of completing the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union was his disbelief in its ability even to survive as a workers' state if the revolution did not spread to more advanced countries. Since Mandel not only does not acknowledge the truth of this, but speaks darkly of 'historical distortions' in Krassó's presentation (NLR 47, p. 42), it would perhaps be useful to let Trotsky speak for himself—not in incidental and untypical quotations taken from their context, but in statements that represent the main content of his thinking on this question.

'Without the direct State support of the European proletariat, the working class of Russia cannot remain in power and convert its temporary domination into a lasting socialistic dictatorship,' Trotsky wrote in 1906.⁴ He vigorously defended this formulation in 1928 against criticism from Radek, who had argued that in talking of State support Trotsky had excessively sharpened the presentation of the Soviet Union's undoubted need for aid from the workers of other countries.⁵

In *The Programme of Peace*, published as a pamphlet in June 1917 and republished with a postscript in 1922 and 1924, he wrote of the Social-

¹ I cannot in the scope of this article examine the question of how far Trotsky's proposals in 1923–24 for the introduction of central planning, and in 1925–27 for industrialization, corresponded to the real possibilities existing at the time they were advanced. It is one of the myths of vulgar Trotskyism that the implementation by Stalin after 1928 of more far-reaching plans than had been put forward by the Opposition proves *per se* that the latter were correct. As Maurice Dobb writes, 'it does not follow that what may have been practicable in 1928–29 was necessarily practicable at an earlier date when both industry and agriculture were weaker'. (M. Dobb, *Soviet Economic Development since 1917*, London, 1948, pp. 206–207.) See also, R. W. Davies, 'The Inadequacies of Russian Trotskyism', in *Labour Review* (London), July–August, 1957. However, I would accept the argument that if the Party had heeded earlier the Opposition's warnings against the dangerous growth in the power of the kulaks in the countryside, the process of collectivization in 1929–30 could have been less violent.

² Trotsky's Letter to Plenum of C.C. of R.C.P., January 15th, 1925, in J. Murphy (ed.), *Errors of Trotskyism* (London, 1925.), p. 374.

³ L. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (New York, 1957), p. 40.

⁴ L. Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects* (New York, 1965), p. 237. Emphasis in original.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 138 ff.

ist revolution in Russia: 'Without waiting for the others we begin and we continue the struggle on our own national soil in complete certainty that our initiative will provide the impulse for the struggle in other countries; and if this were not so, then it would be hopeless to think—as is born out both by historical experience and theoretical considerations—that revolutionary Russia, for example, would be able to maintain herself in the face of conservative Europe, or that Socialist Germany could remain isolated in a capitalist world.'⁶

Outlining the theory of permanent revolution in a preface, written in 1922 (and unreservedly defended in 1928), to his book *The Year 1905*, he spoke of the proletarian vanguard in the early stages of its rule making deep inroads into capitalist property. 'In this it will come into hostile collision not only with all the groupings of the bourgeoisie which supported it in the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasantry with the help of which it came to power. The contradictions in the position of a workers' government in a backward country with a peasant majority can be solved only on an international scale on the arena of the world proletarian revolution.'⁷

In 1937 the theme is essentially the same: '*Without a more or less rapid victory of the proletariat in the advanced countries, the workers' government in Russia will not survive. Left to itself the Soviet régime must either fall or degenerate. More exactly it will first degenerate and then fall. I myself have written about this more than once, beginning in 1905.*'⁸

Economic Growth Underestimated

Trotsky's underestimation of the internal forces of Russian socialism was particularly evident in his lack of confidence in the independent development of a Socialist economy in the USSR. In his 1922 Postscript to his *Programme of Peace* he wrote: 'Socialism is conceivable only on the basis of the productive forces' growth and blossoming . . . So long as the bourgeoisie remains in power in other European states we are compelled, in the struggle against economic isolation, to seek agreements with the capitalist world; at the same time it can be stated with certainty that these agreements, in the best case, will help us to heal this or that economic wound, make this or that step forward, but the genuine rise of Socialist economy in Russia will become possible only after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe.'⁹

In 1927, we find him asserting that the Soviet state was 'always, directly or indirectly, under the relative control of the world market. Herein lies the root of the question. The rate of development is not an arbitrary one; it is determined by the whole of world development, because in the last analysis world industry controls every one of its parts, even if that part is under the proletarian dictatorship and is building up Socialist industry.'¹⁰ In his criticism of the Draft Programme of the

⁶ L. Trotsky, *The Programme of Peace* (Colombo, 1956), p. 18.

⁷ L. Trotsky, *1905* (Moscow, 1922), p. 4.

⁸ L. Trotsky, *Stalinism and Bolshevism* (London, 1956), p. 9. Emphasis in original.

⁹ L. Trotsky, *The Programme of Peace*, pp. 20–21.

¹⁰ *Where is Trotsky going?* (London, 1928), pp. 53–54.

Comintern the next year he went even further: 'To the extent that productivity of labour and the productivity of a social system as a whole are measured on the market by the correlation of prices,' he wrote, 'it is not so much military intervention as the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities that constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to Soviet economy.'¹¹ There is thus no justification for Mandel's denial (p. 42) that Trotsky ever spoke of the planned economy of USSR being subverted by the capitalist world market. The monopoly of foreign trade, which Stalin and the Party majority correctly stressed was the means of the Soviet Union shielding itself from such economic subversion, became for Trotsky 'evidence of the severity and the dangerous character of our dependence.'¹² He saw the fate of the world economy as a whole as of 'decisive significance' as against the subsidiary significance of Russia's Socialist construction.¹³ He went on with the utmost defeatism to suggest the possibility of the productivity of labour growing faster in the predominant capitalist countries than in Russia.¹⁴

The fiasco of this approach was proved by the successes of the Soviet Five Year Plans. Old revolutionary that he was, Trotsky could scarce forbear to cheer in 1936 when he viewed 'the vast scope of industrialization in the Soviet Union, as against a background of stagnation and decline in almost all the capitalist world' that emerged from the comparative indices of industrial production.¹⁵ But while noting that 'it is impossible to deny the fact that even now the forces of production in the Soviet Union are developing at a tempo such as no other country in the world has ever experienced or is experiencing now,'¹⁶ he was never to admit that this was a direct refutation of his pessimistic predictions of the late twenties, which in their turn contrasted strangely with the superindustrialization proposals he had advanced at an earlier period. (It is the latter that are always pointed to by Trotsky's defenders nowadays, whilst the former are conveniently forgotten.) Least of all was he to attempt a Marxist analysis of the source of his errors—a practice that he was always most ready to demand of his political adversaries. Rather was he to draw the strange conclusion that these successes, though signifying that 'the technical premise for Socialism has made an enormous stride forward', were not leading Soviet society towards Socialism but in the direction of 'the regeneration of classes, the liquidation of planned economy and the restoration of capitalist property', in which case, he added, 'the state will inevitably become Fascist'.¹⁷

A Question for Scholiasts?

Isaac Deutscher likened the logic of the argument over Socialism in

¹¹ L. Trotsky, *Third International After Lenin*, p. 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 49. In a recent booklet, Ernest Germain of the Fourth International ridicules those who nowadays use just such arguments as did Trotsky about the Soviet Union's 'subordination' to the world market—and refers them to the efficacy of . . . the monopoly of foreign trade! (E. Germain, *Marxism v. Ultra-Leftism*, Paris, 1967, pp. 69ff.)

¹³ L. Trotsky, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ L. Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (New York, 1957), pp. 6ff.

¹⁶ L. Trotsky, in *Workers International News* (London), July 1938, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

One Country in the twenties to a dispute about whether it would be possible to cover with a roof a building on which both sides were in favour of starting work, being already in agreement on its shape and the materials to be used.¹⁸ Isolated from the undercurrents expressing differences of mood and emphasis that lay behind the heat that it generated, such a debate appears highly scholastic. Apparently conscious of this, the *New International*, the leading American Trotskyist organ of the thirties (praised by Trotsky for its high theoretical level), openly expressed the essence of the Trotskyist position as follows in an editorial dated January 30th, 1935: 'In the light of the present world situation, the theory of "Socialism in One Country", this gospel of the bureaucracy, stands before us in all its nationalistic limitation and its braggart falsity. We refer here, of course, not to the purely abstract possibility or impossibility of building a Socialist society within this or another geographic area—such a theme is for scholiasts; we have in mind the vastly more immediate and concrete, living and historical, and not metaphysical question: Is it possible for an isolated Soviet State to maintain itself for an indeterminate period of time in an imperialist environment, within the constricting circle of Fascist counter-revolutions? The answer of Marxism is, No. The answer of the internal condition of the USSR is, No! . . . Outside of the world revolution there is no salvation.'¹⁹

If we accept the issue posed in this way, history has completely demolished Trotsky's position. If, however, we define Socialism as Mandel does as 'a society without classes, commodities, money and State' (p. 42), then by the very terms of this definition we are led to a different conclusion. If we are going to make a meaningful estimate of Trotsky's political positions, we must avoid arbitrary definitions that take the issues out of their historical context and provoke idle semantic wrangles. The fact is that Mandel's definition is at variance with the Leninist conception that was generally accepted by the Russian Communist Party. In *State and Revolution* Lenin wrote of Socialism as synonymous with Marx's first phase of Communism, representing the 'conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society'. 'Socialism', he went on, '~~does not remove~~ the defects of distribution and the inequality of "bourgeois right" which *continue to prevail* as long as the products are divided "according to the amount of work performed"'. . . The Socialist principle: "An equal amount of labour for an equal quantity of products," is . . . already realized . . . There is still need for a state . . . For the complete withering away of the state, complete Communism is necessary.'²⁰ This distinction was amplified in *The ABC of Communism*, by Bukharin and Preobrezhensky, which from 1919 had been the basic Party textbook. 'In Socialist society, which is inevitable as an intermediate stage between capitalism and Communism,' they wrote, 'money is needed, for it has a part to play in commodity economy . . . In Socialist society, this commodity

¹⁸ I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (London, 1949), pp. 286–287.

¹⁹ *New International* (New York), March 1935, p. 40.

²⁰ V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, hereafter *S. W.* (Moscow, 1937), VII, pp. 85–87. Italics in original. cf. also *S. W.*, VIII, p. 239.

economy will to some extent persist.²¹ The society without commodities, money and state which Mandel defines as Socialism carries many of the characteristics that Party tradition identified with the higher stage of Communism. It is a red herring drawn into the discussion, for it is not what Russian Communists understood when they set themselves the goal of creating a Socialist economy—by which they meant the organization of co-operative production on a large scale, which is the definition that Trotsky gave of Socialism in 1906.²²

Nor will Mandel be able to find any support for his claim that 'even Stalin and Bukharin' agreed that the Socialist economy that they believed possible in Russia 'must have a higher productivity of labour than the most developed capitalist economy' (p. 42)—as distinct from a far higher level of productivity than Russia had known under capitalism and the aim of catching up with and overtaking the capitalist world in productivity—the guarantee of the victory of Socialism *on a world scale*.²³

Lenin's Position

Mandel argues that the conception of 'Socialism in One Country' represents a rejection of elementary Marxist-Leninist theory, of 'the whole heritage of Lenin' (p. 43). This is a particularly misleading quarter-truth. What is true is that when the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917 they did so in the belief that they were, in Lenin's words, 'on the threshold of a world proletarian revolution'.²⁴ For some time after the October Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks thought (and Trotsky was very fond of marshalling quotations to prove it²⁵): 'Either revolution breaks out in the other countries, in the capitalistically more developed countries, immediately, or at least very quickly, or we must perish.'²⁶ However, with characteristic realism, Lenin noted already in March 1918, urging ratification of the humiliating terms of the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty that Trotsky said would be 'treachery in the fullest sense of the word',²⁷ that although they eventually would see the world revolution, 'for the time being it is a very good fairy tale'.²⁸ Since by 1921 it was clear to him that internationally 'events did not proceed along as straight a line as we expected' and it had 'proved impossible to call forth revolution in other capitalist countries',²⁹ he devoted himself more and more to considering the novel problem of the construction of Socialism in Russia in the context of an indefinitely delayed international revolution. On March 15th 1921 he had stressed two conditions on

²¹ N. Bukharin & E. Preobrazhenski, *An A.B.C. of Communism* (London, 1924), pp. 345–346.

²² L. Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*, p. 220.

²³ Actually the average productivity of labour in the USSR today is equal to and even above that of most capitalist countries, whilst being still below that of the USA.

²⁴ *S.W.*, VI, p. 225.

²⁵ See, e.g., L. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1936), III, Appendix L.

²⁶ *S.W.*, IX, p. 227.

²⁷ Quoted by Lenin, *S.W.*, VII, p. 309.

²⁸ *S.W.*, VII, p. 297.

²⁹ *S.W.*, IX, p. 227.

which the Socialist revolution could be 'completely successful' in Russia: first, 'that it receives timely support from the Socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries' and, second, that 'the agreement between the proletariat . . . and the majority of the peasant population' be maintained.³⁰ Less than a month later he was noting: 'Twenty years of correct relations with the peasantry and victory is assured on a world scale (even with a delay in the proletarian revolutions, which are growing.)'³¹ Two years later, in his last articles, Lenin was even more preoccupied with the problem. 'What if the complete hopelessness of the situation (of Russia in the world—M.J.), by intensifying tenfold the energies of the workers and peasants, offered us the possibility of proceeding to create the fundamental requirement of civilization in a way different from that of the West European countries?', he asked in January 1923. ' . . . If a definite level of culture is required for the creation of Socialism (although nobody can tell what that definite level of culture is), why cannot we begin by achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and *then*, with the help of a workers' and peasants' government and a Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations? . . . You say that civilization is necessary for the creation of Socialism. Very good. But why could we not have begun by creating such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the expulsion of the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards Socialism? Where, in what books, have you read that such variations of the customary historical order of events are impermissible or impossible?'³²

Finally, in his article, *On Co-operation*, he wrote: 'The power of State over all large-scale means of production, the power of State in the hands of the proletariat, the alliance of this proletariat with the many millions of small and very small peasants, the assured leadership of the peasantry by the proletariat, etc; is this not all that is necessary in order for the co-operatives . . . to build complete Socialist society? This is not yet the building of Socialist society, but it is all that is necessary and sufficient for this building . . . A system of civilized co-operators under the social ownership of the means of production, with the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, is Socialism.'³³

Was Socialism Achieved?

The idea that Russia should aim to complete the building of Socialism on its own if the international revolution continued to be delayed did represent a departure from the traditional theory of the Bolsheviks, who had never foreseen their country finding itself an isolated workers' State long enough for the question to arise. But, although it was never theoretically elaborated by Lenin, we have seen how in the last period of his working life he was coming more and more in practice to adopt such a perspective. It was perfectly in keeping with Marxist theory that, after his death, the Party should come to terms with the new

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

³¹ V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochineniy* (Moscow, 1963), XLIII, p. 385.

³² *S.W.*, VI, pp. 511–512 Lenin's emphasis.

³³ *S.W.*, IX, pp. 403, 406.

situation and spell out its confidence that 'NEP Russia will be transformed into Socialist Russia'³² by its own forces, if the revolution which all hoped for did not come in other countries and alleviate their problems.

What did this perspective mean? Lenin had enumerated five elements constituting the socio-economic forms which existed in Russia after the October Revolution, and into the period of the New Economic Policy introduced in 1921: 1) patriarchal, largely self-sufficient peasant economy; 2) small commodity production (including the majority of peasants selling their grain); 3) private capitalism; 4) State capitalism, and 5) Socialism.³⁵ The transition to Socialism was seen as meaning the transformation of Russia from a backward peasant land into a country with a modern centrally planned State industry and collective and State agriculture, accompanied by big educational and cultural advances. It meant the effective elimination of the first four of Lenin's socio-economic categories, entailing the disappearance of the kulaks (rural bourgeoisie) and the nepmen (merchant capitalists), and a vast growth of the fifth, comprising State-owned industry and State farms on the one hand, and collective farms on the other.³⁶ Defined in these terms, Stalin was able to say correctly after 1935 that Trotsky had been wrong, and that 'our bourgeoisie has already been liquidated and Socialism has already been built in the main. This is what we call the victory of Socialism, or, to be more exact, the victory of Socialist Construction in one country'.³⁷

To leave the problem there would, however, be all too facile. Not only had the collectivization of agriculture been carried out in an unnecessarily costly and harsh manner, that left profound distrust between important sections of the peasantry and the soviet State, but political power and initiative was taken out of the hands of the working people and concentrated effectively in those of Stalin and a small irresponsible ruling group paternalistically substituting itself for them.³⁸ Stalin, in

³² *Ibid.*, p. 381.

³³ *J. W.*, VII, p. 361. By State capitalism, Lenin meant here the control by the workers' State of capitalist producers and traders, who were permitted to operate 'within certain limits'. He distinguished it sharply from 'the State capitalism which exists under the capitalist system when the State takes direct control of certain capitalist enterprises'. (See *J. W.*, volume IX, pp 165-174, 338-339). There is nothing in common between Lenin's concept of State capitalism as a progressive transitional form paving the way for Russia's advance to socialism in this early period, and the conceptions of State capitalism that have been advanced to give a basic characterization of the U.S.S.R. by, *inter alia*, Karl Kautsky, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the International Socialism group and Milovan Djilas.

³⁴ In his article, *On Co-operation*, *op. cit.*, Lenin characterizes this type of co-operative property, based on nationalization of the land, as Socialist.

³⁵ J. V. Stalin, *The Final Victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union*, Reply to Ivanov, February 2nd, 1938, (London, n.d.), pp. 3, 6. In his letter Stalin reiterates his previous position that 'the final victory of Socialism, in the sense of full guarantee against the restoration of bourgeois property relations, is possible only on an international scale' and not so long as the Soviet Union was surrounded by numerous capitalist countries. (pp. 6-7.)

³⁶ I cannot go all the way with Khrushchev in his total rejection of the concept of 'substitutionism' (*NLR*, 44, p. 66) which appears to me too sweeping. If an individual, group or party act in the name of the working class whilst depriving it of its democratic right to decide the broad outlines of policy, this is substitution.

an extraordinarily difficult international situation, led the development and defence of the economic and cultural foundations of Socialism—his great historical merit. But at the same time he rode roughshod over the democratic rights and organs of the Party and the people, committing widespread arbitrary and brutal persecutions in which many of the finest Russian and foreign revolutionaries met a tragic end—his great crime, for which the Soviet Union and the international Communist movement are still paying dearly today.

Since Socialism and democracy have always been considered by Marxists to go hand in hand, Trotsky was on much stronger ground when, shifting his main line of argument, he came in the second half of the thirties to make this his central objection to the claim that Socialism had been built in Russia. He then indicated the police terror, the trumped up Moscow Trials of old Bolsheviks and the general suppression of political freedom, preceded and accompanied by a great increase in the power of the degenerated bureaucratic apparatus in both the Party and the State. What he failed to understand was that, for a certain period (which may be quite prolonged), an uneasy and antagonistic coexistence of a Socialist economy and an undemocratic, un-Socialist superstructure is possible. Sooner or later the development of the former will tend to push society (albeit tortuously, unevenly and not at all 'automatically') towards the reforming of the superstructure and its progressive alignment with the economic base—and with the desires of its progressively more developed and educated working class and intelligentsia. What had been achieved of a Socialist economy in the thirties was, of course, only the elements of Socialism which still needed several more decades of peaceful growth before it fully overcame the terrible legacy of Russian backwardness and appeared as a *fully developed* prosperous, harmonious and cultured Socialist society. The Soviet Union today, though immensely more advanced than in the thirties, has still a fair way to go before completing this state of Socialist development. Talk of a transition to Communism in the foreseeable future made in the Stalin and Krushchev eras is now generally seen to have contained an enormous amount of bombast and extravagant claims. It is fair to say that Trotsky's writings do provide a useful corrective to this sort of hyperbole, which was described by Togliatti as 'a prevailing tendency to exaggerate in the exaltation of achievements above all in the propaganda of that time, but also in the general presentation, and to consider all problems solved, and objective contradictions overcome—together with the difficulties and conflicts which are always inherent in the building of Socialist society, and which are liable to be very serious and insurmountable unless they are acknowledged openly.'³⁹ In criticising the manifestations of national superiority, conceit and narrow-mindedness that went along with this, he appealed correctly to the fundamentally internationalist traditions of Marxism, whilst wrongly arguing that what he was attacking flowed inevitably from the theory of Socialism in One Country.

³⁹ P. Togliatti, *Questions Posed by the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U.*, Interview with *Nesni Arguments* (London, 1956), p. 8.

'Revolution Betrayed'

The Revolution Betrayed, written by Trotsky in 1936, shows both the strengths and weaknesses of his position at this time. Analysing the development of the Soviet Union up to the mid-thirties, he scored not a few bulls-eyes in exposing the negative effects of Stalinism on so many aspects of Russian life. However, many of his criticisms were carping and ill-conceived, such as his attack on the terms of the 1936 Constitution, the weakness of which lay not in its extremely democratic provisions but in their irrelevance to the real situation in the Soviet Union at that time, when Stalin could and did trample them underfoot. For instance, he described the introduction of the universal, equal and direct vote, replacing the indirect system—the weighting of representation in favour of the working class as against the peasantry and the denial of the vote to members of former exploiting classes—as 'juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat'.⁴⁰ The constitution as a whole, he actually asserted, represented 'an immense step back from Socialist to bourgeois principles' and created 'the political premises for the birth of a new possessing class'.⁴¹

Trotsky's dogmatic shibboleth of the impossibility of building Socialism in one country led him even now to underestimate how deeply entrenched and resilient the Socialist system was in Russia, despite the ravages wrought by Stalin's purges. Without the interference of a revolution in the West, he claimed, if war should erupt, 'the social bases of the Soviet Union must be crushed, not only in the case of defeat, but also in the case of victory.'⁴²

He went on to write that 'the Soviet bureaucracy has gone far towards preparing a bourgeois restoration' and 'must inevitably in future stages seek supports for itself in property relations' entailing 'its conversion into a new possessing class'.⁴³ In fact, of course, the victory of the Soviet Union in the war (Trotsky had predicted defeat⁴⁴) was not followed by the slightest sign of a move towards a 'bourgeois counter-revolution'⁴⁵, but on the contrary by the establishment under the leadership of allegedly 'counter-revolutionary' Communist Parties of Socialist property relations in 13 other countries and the emergence of a world Socialist system competing with the capitalist one. Moreover, since Stalin's death in 1953, the most negative features of Stalinism spotlighted by Trotsky have been dismantled. This 'de-Stalinization' has not occurred through the 'inevitable' violent political revolution to

⁴⁰ *Revolution Betrayed*, p. 261.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 229. It is interesting to note that after the last war the Trotskyist Fourth International, far from making any self-criticism or analysis of this error, extolled its own 'correctness' and went on to repeat the blunder. In its 1946 Manifesto, under the heading, 'The Power of Marxist Prognosis', its International Conference claimed that 'in every important respect the analysis of the Fourth International has stood the test of time' (*Workers' International News*, London, April-May 1946, p. 171), and went on in a resolution to state that 'only the intervention of the proletarian revolution can prevent a fatal outcome for the USSR in its present trial of strength with imperialism'. (*Quatrième Internationale*, Paris, April-May, 1946, p. 18.)

⁴³ *Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 253-254.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

overthrow the bureaucracy led by the Fourth International, as forecast and advocated in *The Revolution Betrayed*,⁴⁶ but essentially through the initiative of forces within the Communist Party (which Trotsky had written off as disintegrated,⁴⁷ 'dead'⁴⁸ and 'no longer the vanguard of the proletariat'⁴⁹) and within 'the bureaucracy', which on Trotsky's definition⁵⁰ included all Party, State, and collective farm leaders, managers, technicians and foremen, drawn from among the most advanced sections of the working class and peasantry.

A fundamental Marxist criticism of Stalinism still remains to be made. But it will not proceed from Trotsky's premises, although his writings should be studied for the many valuable lessons—both positive and negative—that they hold for us. Yet even where his insights are at their most brilliant they occur within the framework of a fundamentally false sociological model which prevented him from understanding the laws of development of Soviet society or grasping the (admittedly new and unprecedented) phenomenon of Stalinism in its complexity and many-sidedness. Hence the unkindness with which history has treated the major predictions that we have quoted in the course of this article.

The source of most of Trotsky's errors in relation to Russia was already present in the years before the First World War. 'He sometimes seemed to view Russia's past and present almost as a vacuum,' noted Deutscher. 'This was the weakness underlying his call for Europeanization' and also the flaw in his attitude to Bolshevism. It was Lenin's strength that he took Russian reality as it was, while he set out to change it. Lenin's party had deep roots in Russian soil; and it absorbed all that that soil could yield in revolutionary strength and harshness, in world-shaking courage and in primitive crudity.'⁵¹ Trotsky did not join that party till the eve of the October Revolution and never absorbed that tradition, remaining to a large extent a Western revolutionary intellectual. His pessimism towards the prospects of a Socialist Russia was complemented by his much vaunted 'revolutionary optimism' towards prospects of revolution in the West and a strange belief that 'optimism regarding an isolated proletarian state would entail pessimism towards the international revolution'.⁵² As Lunacharsky showed in his sympathetic profile, Trotsky's 'path to revolution . . . followed a straight line'.⁵³ When history disproved his prognoses or ushered in new and unforeseen situations, he lacked Lenin's 'sense of reality which leads one now and then to alter one's tactics' and the 'tremendous sensitivity to the demands of the time' that prompted Lenin 'at one moment to sharpen both edges of his sword, at another to place it in its sheath'.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 284–290.

⁴⁷ *Stalinism and Bolshevism*, p. 8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ *Revolution Betrayed*, p. 138.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 135 ff.

⁵¹ I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed* (London, 1954), p. 191.

⁵² L. Trotsky, Letter on 15th Anniversary of October Revolution, October 13th, 1932, in duplicated bulletin of Balham (Trotskyist) group, London, 1932.

⁵³ A. V. Lunacharsky, *Revolutionary Silhouettes* (London, 1967), p. 67.

⁵⁴ *Loc. cit.*

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short notes

Tom Little: *South Arabia*. Pall Mall, 35s.

Kennedy Trevaskis: *Shades of Amber*. Hutchinson, 50s.

Dana Adams Schmidt: *Yemen: the Unknown War*. Bodley Head, 45s.

For anyone in danger of forgetting what a mindless and vicious system of oppression the British were capable of maintaining right into the late 1960s, the Little and Trevaskis books should be required reading. Trevaskis, who was the chief architect of the South Arabian Federation, seems to have designed his book almost solely in order to cover his own tracks. Numerous important events are undated. Having blundered about in the area for more than a decade, Trevaskis attempts to pre-empt criticism with the remark (reprinted as the caption to a photograph of the author sucking his pipe) that: 'At least I had learned that only the supremely arrogant would claim to know all the answers.' Obviously Trevaskis knew none—and little surprise, by the author's account of his own thought process: 'It was while I was wondering whether the roots of tribal discontent might not be found in the oligarchic character of South Arabian chiefly rule. . .'. Sometimes even the author met his match at political inanity: 'I had an opportunity of putting my ideas to Hopkinson [a Tory minister] during his visit, and found him surprisingly receptive to the need for what he called a "theme", agreeing that it should be independence with the creation of a South Arabian Jordan as our objective.' It is frightening and revolting to read a book like this. There is not one indication of, for example, comparative British expenditure on military installations and education. Not even a glimmer of awareness of the atrocious effects of colonialism on the South Yemeni people. Not a line to indicate that there could be such a thing as a progressive popular regime: the forces which drove the British out are simply described as 'Anarchy'.

Tom Little puts considerably more order into his account of the Federation's history, and there is an appraisal of the local political forces. Little points out the NLF's extraordinary success in the Radfan campaign both militarily and in avoiding political detection by the British, which gave them greater freedom of action than the FLOSY (even though for some time FLOSY was tolerated while the NLF was banned). There is a relatively appreciative summing up of the new NLF regime. But Little's book, too, is disappointing, even though vastly superior to Trevaskis'. Both structure their accounts in an imperialist optic. Like the British Press, they cut out with independence. During the period of British rule they ignore the effects of colonial oppression; after the victory of the liberation struggle they tend to regard the area as politically uninteresting. Yet the NLF forced the British out of Aden and the Federation in exemplary fashion: how did they do it?

Dana Adams Schmidt is an extremely well-informed American correspondent with royalist sympathies. His book is unsurpassed and unsurpassable for hard facts, including a brilliant account of the original 1962 revolution and a thorough round-up of the military situation up to January 1968. Schmidt

has been almost everywhere in the Yemen and met almost everybody of note on both sides—though he has spent more time with the royalists. Fortunately this does not prevent him from recounting episodes such as the first attempt to bombard Sana, which was directed by a group of British 'mercenaries'. When travelling through the royalist-held area of Yemen early last year, Eric Rouleau of *Le Monde* encountered a large number of British technicians, mainly running the radio network. Many of these appeared to have been seconded through dummy front organizations by the British government. Two of the characters named by Schmidt would seem to have been almost official—one of them being the aide-de-camp to the British High Commissioner in Aden! The NLF victory in South Yemen has changed events to the North. In recent months the Republican forces have received a powerful boost from the NLF in Aden, whose political expertise in organizing popular militias seems to have more than compensated for the departure of the UAR army. Schmidt's book is very much to be recommended as a piece of thorough journalism—though it is strange that he never mentions the pioneering work on modern Yemen: Mohamed Said El Attar's *Le Sous-Développement Économique et Social du Yémen: Perspectives de la Révolution Yéménite*, which remains the fundamental background text on the area. J.H.

Ralph Horwitz: *Political Economy of South Africa*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson. 63s.

One of the most interesting features of South African capitalism is the ambiguous position of large-scale capital *vis-à-vis* the white nationalist regime and its ideology. In the book under review, massive evidence is presented to support the assumption of a conflict between the interests of large-scale capital, on the one hand, and those of the white workers and small-scale capital (operating mainly in agriculture) who form the power base of the regime, on the other. The former upholds the supremacy of market forces as a principle of resources allocation and income distribution, while the latter favour an administered capitalist economy directed to preserving their privileges relative to the African population and to improving their bargaining position in dealing with large-scale capital. An analogous situation was illustrated in my article on the Political Economy of Rhodesia (in *NLR* 39), and it is gratifying to find the assumption further corroborated.

Horwitz's analysis, however, leaves much to be desired in two respects. In the first place, sufficient emphasis is not given to the fact that the conflict is 'non-antagonistic' in the sense that it is marginal to the main interests of the classes in question. These, of course, are centred upon retaining South Africa within the sphere of operation of international capitalism and perpetuating the exploitation of the weak political-economic position of the African majority. Only this marginal character of the conflict can explain the vital economic backing provided to the regime by international capitalism (partly South African based) in spite of the liberal protestations of its representatives.

But the main weakness of the analysis resides in the underlying theme that market mechanisms enhance 'rationality'. This is questionable at least on two grounds. 'Economic rationality' and the rationality of a system are not the same thing. The latter has dimensions other than the 'economic'. In particular, the rationality of a system must be defined from the standpoint of the various classes that can be defined within that system and their struggle for political-economic power. A more holistic approach would have shown that reliance on market forces can be expected to engender a structure of production, distribution and power that can hardly be defined as rational from the stand-

point of the white working class and petty bourgeoisie, or, for that matter, of the semi-proletarianized African peasantry.

Even if we postulate the predominance of the 'economic' in defining rationality, it is still questionable whether the administrative impingements on market forces have normally reduced the development potential of the South African economy. From a static, short-time point of view, the assumption may have some validity. However, that the structural transformations of the South African economy, which made its long-term growth possible, would have occurred in the absence of those impingements is something that has to be proved and not taken for granted as Horwitz seems to imply.

These criticisms should not be taken as in any way detracting from the importance of this work. It is refreshing, in an era of alienated social science, to find non-marxist scholars discussing social problems in a historical perspective.

G. Arrighi

communication

Tamara Deutscher writes:

I have been following with great interest the discussion between Mandel and Krassó. So far I have not been tempted to express any opinion on this exchange and even now I should like to deal *only* with the references in Krassó's latest 'Reply' to Isaac's work, as I fear that these may give a somewhat distorted impression of the tenor of Isaac's writings.

It would not be fair to reproach Krassó with a certain lack of subtlety in using quotations from the Trilogy to support his point of view: he has limited space, in which it is extremely difficult to render all the nuances of Isaac's treatment of Trotsky.

Isaac disagreed, of course, with Krassó's premiss that 'the necessary point of departure to assess Trotsky and Stalin is Lenin'. In his *Stalin* Isaac describes how Trotsky was forced to accept the Leninist cult 'though his rational mind and European tastes were outraged by it'. Trotsky thus involved himself in fighting on the ground on which he was 'most vulnerable'. Krassó seems again to drag Trotsky on to the ground of the Leninist cult instead of discussing his Marxism, as he promises to do in the first sentence of his 'Reply'. He might just as well have quoted the following: 'Lenin also repeatedly indicated to the party and the International his regard for Trotsky as interpreter of Marxism', or 'The uniform of Lenin's disciple was, anyhow, too tight for him' (for Trotsky). Krassó sounds not a little like an old school marm, wagging his finger at Trotsky because he never 'genuinely learnt the lesson of Lenin's theory of the party'. Krassó quotes Isaac's 'explicit comment' on Trotsky's conception of a party 'acting as a *locum tenens* for the proletariat'. But this comment becomes less *simplistic* in its context, viewed together with the whole trend of thought on 'substitutionism', and recalled once again as it is in *The Prophet Unarmed* on p. 13, and on the very last page of *The Prophet Armed*.

So far I have reproached Krassó with pardonable simplifications only. Now, however, I am coming to a more serious criticism:

NLR p. 92 he again refers to Isaac, who allegedly 'makes clear' that the quotation from Lenin—'there was no better Bolshevik than Trotsky'—is 'mere hearsay'. On the contrary Isaac does not treat this as 'mere hearsay'. Krassó gives as his reference *The Prophet Armed*, p. 259, without adding, however, that Isaac himself refers—on the very same page—to his source; namely to *The Stalin School of Falsification*, in which we find a reproduction of a photostat copy of galleys (before they were tampered with) in which the sentence is actually quite easy to read. Krassó's omission of this is rather disturbing.

On NLR p. 94 Krassó again quotes Isaac (*The Prophet Unarmed*, not *Armed*, p. 450) actually using quotation marks, but wording it quite differently throughout: Kamenev in his talk with Bukharin does not say, 'If the country perishes we perish with it . . . If the country manages to recover . . . we still perish'. Kamenev uses words much more emotive and much more strongly charged: 'If our nation is crushed we are crushed with it; and, if it extricates itself and Stalin changes course in time, we are still going to be crushed'. What is the reason and the purpose of this re-phrasing of a quotation?

I do not wish to enter into the core of the debate between Mandel and Krassó, but I really must object to any selective or inaccurate quotations from Isaac's works.

Editors' note: Lack of space forbids Nicolas Krassó from answering Tamara Deutscher's complaints in this number: so his reply will appear in NLR 51.

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No socialist today would dream of doubting the client status of this country vis-à-vis the United States, and more particularly of the Wilson government vis-à-vis the policies of Washington. At least since the Second World War, there has hardly been a moment when the subservience of both Conservative and Labour régimes towards the United States has not been abundantly plain. Yet although the general contours of the 'special relationship' are visible at all times, its precise modalities are often harder to analyse, for the evident reason that documentation of policy on both sides of the Atlantic is not readily provided by its executors for public inspection. Historians have to wait patiently for fifty years to pass before they can analyse fully events by then buried in the past. New Left Review regards itself as fortunate in having acquired a document which throws an unusually clear light on some aspects of the 'special relationship', on Britain's precise role in Nato, and on the way the American policymakers assess the utility of the alliance. Neustadt's memorandum displays their blunt evaluation of the Labour leaders' qualities and intentions just before their accession to power in 1964. It provides valuable evidence of the real relationship between the United States and one of its 'allies' and indicates Washington's direct access to the British state apparatus—the bureaucracy which remains permanent while governments change: We asked Andrew Kopkind to evaluate its status and place it in a historical context.

The revolt of ten million workers and students in France in May of this year was the greatest mass upsurge seen in Europe for thirty years. It has transformed the perspectives of revolutionary practice in the advanced capitalist countries. The months that have elapsed since have helped to clarify its long-run significance. The next issue of NLR will be largely devoted to Marxist analysis and discussion of the nature, meaning and lessons of the French upheaval. Preparatory to this issue, we are publishing in the present number of the review a selection of key texts by Antonio

Gramsci on the great wave of Italian factory occupations in 1919-1920. These serve both to introduce the early Gramsci to English-speaking readers and to make available the only sustained theoretical contribution in the West on the political problems posed by factory occupations and councils—the central drama of the French events. These texts of Gramsci represent a crucial moment in the development of revolutionary thought: their relevance has never been greater than today.

The death of Che Guevara in Bolivia last year led many detachments of the Left to believe that the internationalist strategy he represented in Latin America had been extinguished. The declaration we publish by Inti Peredo, the leading survivor of the small guerrilla nucleus in Bolivia, is clear evidence to the contrary. Peredo, of whom Che speaks particularly highly in his posthumously published diary, writes a powerful and insectarian message to his countrymen and the world outside. It is no accident that within a few weeks of the publication of his message in Cuba, the Bolivian military dictatorship was thrown into a new political crisis by the revelation that its own Minister of the Interior had sent Che's diary to Cuba, from revulsion against the Barrientos regime. The impact of the Bolivian guerrilla nucleus has flared up after its apparent defeat and, its political effects are only now becoming visible.

A translation of the decrees of the October Revolution on Soviet art colleges may come as a shock to those accustomed to present-day Russian standards. For art students they are a salutary yardstick by which to judge all reformist proposals for art colleges in Britain. Lastly, we are publishing a seminal essay of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan: Lacan's work is widely influential outside his discipline, and it is time it received its due international currency.

Andrew Kopkind

The 'Special Relationship'

'When those states which have been acquired are accustomed to live at liberty under their own laws, there are three ways of holding them. The first is to despoil them; the second is to go and live there in person; the third is to allow them to live under their own laws, taking a tribute of them, and creating within the country a government composed of a few who will keep it friendly to you. Because this government, being created by the prince, knows that it cannot exist without his friendship and protection, and will do all it can to keep them. What is more, a city used to liberty can be more easily held by means of its citizens than in any other way, if you wish to preserve it. . . . Whoever becomes the ruler of a free city and does not destroy it, can expect to be destroyed by it, for it can always find a motive for rebellion in the name of liberty and of its ancient usages, which are forgotten neither by lapse of time nor by benefits received. . . '

Machiavelli. *The Prince*. Chapter V

Lyndon Johnson had rarely troubled himself with the ancient rituals of European diplomacy. By the time he acceded to the Presidency, his experience in international affairs in general had been limited to chance encounters with Pakistani camel-drivers and Vietnamese well-diggers. If Machiavelli's principles had ever seeped into his political consciousness, he had been impressed only by the first method of princely policy: despoliation. For twenty years, American interests in Western Europe had been promoted and maintained by much more subtle means. Dominant after the Second World War, the us had established a

network of friendly European governments, in many cases hand-picked by officials in Washington. Within a limited framework, self-government was not only permitted but encouraged; only if 'rebellion' threatened basic us interests—economic development, military dominance, political alliance, containment of the Left—were the imperial prerogatives, of intervention exercised.

Despite Johnson's inattention in early 1964, the business of tending America's acquired states in Europe was being done by the aides and advisers to the late President Kennedy. Unwatched by Johnson, the former Kennedy staff men were engaged in an elaborate bureaucratic war-game on the battleground of European policy. Byzantine intrigues were conducted by a group of State Department officials known in Washington as 'the theologians,' and in England as 'the cabal'. Against them were the 'realists' or 'pragmatists' collected in the National Security Council of the White House.

'The cabal' was the inheritor of the tradition of the Grand Design of Atlantic alliance, the mainstream of us efforts in Europe since the war. The cabalists argued for dominance of the Common Market in the European political economy as the central priority of us policy. The objective was to get Britain into the Common Market and keep Germany out of close political alliance with France. Even though the success of that policy might cause temporary difficulties for the us balance of payments position, such disadvantages were seen to be outweighed by the political benefits. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr wrote in his history of the Kennedy Administration, 'If Britain joined the Market, London could offset the eccentricities of policy in Paris and Bonn; moreover, Britain, with its world obligations, could keep the EEC from becoming a high-tariff, inward-looking, white man's club.'¹ Schlesinger documented the importance which Kennedy ascribed to Britain's entry; it was Kennedy who 'raised the matter on Britain's behalf with De Gaulle in Paris in June 1961,' and when Hugh Gaitskell came to Washington early in 1962, 'Kennedy mobilised half the cabinet to tell him that Britain must plunge into Europe.'

As always, Britain's function had been that of a tool for America to use in the pursuit of its German policy. Germany was and is the primary focus for us interests in Western Europe. Most of Washington's efforts in the Cold War period were spent securing West Germany in political alliance. For the first several post-war years, fear of Soviet expansionism in Western Europe was used to keep Germany close to the us. Atomic weapons were denied the Germans; whatever the rationalizations may have been for that policy, one very important effect was to keep the Federal Government begging for nuclear arms or nuclear protection. The 'bomb'—that is, the piece of hardware—became a substitute for diplomacy. It was a prime example of the new system of 'technology-statecraft' which Washington was developing.

By 1964, much of the stability in Europe that the us had endeavoured to

¹ Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr, *A Thousand Days*, New York: Fawcett-Crest, 1967, p. 772.

maintain throughout the fifties was becoming unhinged. Detente with Russia—or the prospect of it—was seen by Kennedy to be a desirable policy goal, but the possibility of diminished tensions loosened the us-German alliance. It is not certain that any high us official ever took seriously the threat of Soviet aggression in Europe after 1945 (George Kennan's memoirs indicate that State Department leaders saw such an attack as an absurdity). But by the time of the Kennedy Administration, Schlesinger wrote, 'no one believed in the likelihood of a Soviet invasion of Western Europe unless the Russians thought themselves exempt from nuclear reprisal (and, except for Berlin, not many believed it likely then).'² According to Schlesinger, Kennedy himself 'regarded much of the talk about European nuclear deterrents, multilateral forces, conventional force levels, American divisions and so on as militarily supererogatory since it was based on the expectation of a Soviet attack on Western Europe, "than which nothing is less likely."'³

France's defection from NATO—real or impending—increased the level of anxiety in Washington. General De Gaulle's new interest in Eastern Europe and his courtship of West Germany was profoundly unsettling. On top of that, prospects that a Labour Government would be formed in England, with its component of ban-the-bombers and anti-NATO types, compounded the fears.

As Washington saw it, the threat to American power in Europe (the contradiction to imperial dominance which Machiavelli suggested) had two parts. One came from the Right: it was expressed in De Gaulle's use of Europe's economic power to compete as a capitalist bloc with the us, and its key was the Franco-German alliance in European politics and the Common Market. The other threat came from the Left: though weaker and more easily isolated, it was finding expression in British agitation for nuclear disarmament, the danger of popular front government in Italy,⁴ and the always-present if distant contingency of labour uprisings such as finally occurred in France this year. Rapprochement of Western with Eastern Europe was the critical element in both threats.

Out of the immense resources of American diplomacy and technology, Washington policy planners gradually settled on the most unwieldy, unworkable, overcomplicated and altogether absurd diplomatic contraption to secure its dominant role in Europe once more. The machine was called the Multilateral Nuclear Force, and it was supposed to be a 'NATO flotilla of surface ships armed with Polaris missiles, whose atomic warheads would be under us control. Employment and deployment of the missiles would be subject to close and continuing consultation among those NATO Alliance partners who wanted to participate and share the cost.'

President Eisenhower's last secretary of state, Christian Herter, broached the idea for a NATO joint nuclear force in 1960. President

² *Ibid.*, p. 779.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 782.

⁴ Philip L. Geyelin, *Lyndon B. Johnson and the World*, New York: Praeger, 1966, p. 171.

Kennedy then had the notion that it should take the form of a fleet of Polaris submarines, but gradually the plan evolved into a surface-ship system. Kennedy presented a version of the scheme to Prime Minister Macmillan at Nassau in 1962,⁵ but the British (and other NATO members) preferred to interpret it in ways somewhat at variance with Kennedy's understanding. The British interpretation—which Harold Wilson rather fancied—was for a complex of co-operative and combined nuclear forces among Atlantic nations—only one part of which would be the MLF.

For public appreciation in the US, the MLF idea was promoted as a means of keeping atomic weapons from Germany while at the same time appeasing the Germans' nationalistic and militaristic impulses.⁶ There were subsidiary arguments: MLF would defuse the charges of an American nuclear monopoly; it would minimise Washington's preferential treatment of Britain (the bone in De Gaulle's throat), and it would strengthen Western defences in Europe.⁷

But the underlying purpose—to keep Bonn locked into the Alliance—was never successfully concealed, either from the US public or the other NATO governments. Schlesinger said that Kennedy told him after De Gaulle rejected Britain's entry into the Common Market, 'On the political side, our chief objective was to tie Germany more firmly into the structure of Western Europe.'⁸ In the face of De Gaulle's challenge to US hegemony—which involved the *force de frappe*, alliance with Germany, and the exclusion of Britain from Europe—the MLF seemed crucial. 'If De Gaulle meant to make Western Germany choose between France and the United States, the MLF in Washington's view was the way to make it clear that Bonn would find greater security in the Atlantic relationship.'⁹ Kennedy, Schlesinger continued, wanted the MLF to 'fill a vacuum into which, otherwise, Gaullism might seep.'¹⁰

The MLF plan fitted the designs of the 'theologians' in the State Department¹¹ who saw it as a means to reassert American economic and political domination of the Atlantic Alliance.¹² They took their Euro-

⁵ Theodore C. Sorensen, *Kennedy*, New York: Bantam, 1966, p. 638.

⁶ Geyelin, *op cit.*, p. 164.

⁷ Sorensen, *op cit.*, p. 640.

⁸ Schlesinger, *op cit.*, p. 796.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 797.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 798.

¹¹ The 'cabal' was a loose association, of course. Various officials were ascribed membership at various times. Among them: Robert Bowie, Harvard law professor, an assistant secretary under Eisenhower, who is thought to have 'invented' MLF in a secret report of 1959–1960, and returned to the State Department under Kennedy and Johnson; Henry Owen, the prime-mover of MLF, now chairman of the State Department Policy Planning Council; Walt W. Rostow, formerly State Department Councillor and Policy Planning Chairman, now principal architect of the Johnson strategy in Vietnam; Robert Schaezel, former deputy assistant Secretary of State for Europe.

¹² Many of the problems the 'theologians' set for themselves—and never solved—were taken care of by the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia this year. In one blow, it counteracted the fragmenting effects of détente on NATO, discredited Gaullist foreign policy of 'one Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals', and brought West Germany closer to the US than at any time since the erection of the Wall. For the State Department, it was an MLF without tears.

pean cues from Jean Monnet and the French 'Atlanticists'. In general, the 'theologians' were responsible to or closely allied with the 'Foreign Policy establishment' in New York and Washington, and its constituency of business and corporate interests.

But the 'realists' on the White House staff had interests which were more immediately (and banally) political. They were concerned with domestic affairs, Congressional relations, and the protection of the President from political error. They prided themselves on espousing no particular theology (except the ideology of pragmatism, which is the most constricting of all), but served simply as political entrepreneurs and odd-jobsmen. Quite quickly, they saw that the MLF was a bad bet.

Their reasons, of course, were 'realistic'. First of all, they saw that Congress was strongly opposed: the liberals because MLF seemed to stand in the way of disarmament, and the conservatives because MLF implied sharing precious atomic secrets with foreigners who were not clever enough to discover the secrets for themselves. Defence Secretary McNamara had tried to convince Congress of MLF's merit, and had failed. To each of the official arguments for MLF, the White House staff had prepared counter-arguments. MLF would arouse suspicions that Germany was getting too close to its own atomic deterrent; it would actually emphasize US preferential treatment of Britain; it would produce fresh attacks on the American nuclear monopoly; it would not measurably increase Western defence power in Europe.¹³ 'No one denied that the real purpose of MLF was political,' Sorensen wrote, and so the White House staff made its case on political grounds.

The principal rationale for MLF—that Germany demanded nuclear capability of some kind—was destroyed by Schlesinger, after a trip to Europe: 'Macmillan had long deprecated this notion; and, spending a few days in London in early 1963, I encountered general doubt. Jo Grimond . . . who had just returned from a trip to Germany and France, said he had come upon no significant German demand for nuclear weapons. Henry Kissinger similarly reported that he saw 'no signs of any domestic pressure in Germany for a national nuclear-weapons program. Grimond, George Brown of the Labour Party, and other British political leaders all feared, however, that the Marchant mission¹⁴ was having the effect of generating such a demand where none existed before.'¹⁵

With so much weight against it, Kennedy turned against MLF in 1963. His own reason (once the arguments for it were disposed of) was that the scheme might spoil prospects for his detente with the Soviet Union—as spelled out in his important speech at American University in late spring of that year. Kennedy 'had no desire to raise tensions and reunite the Communists to patch over Western splits,' Sorensen wrote.

After Kennedy's death, the 'cabal' reappeared. Unnoticed by the new

¹³ Sorensen, *op cit*, p. 640.

¹⁴ Livingston T. Marchant, a former Undersecretary of State in the Eisenhower years and an ambassador to Canada, had gone to Europe for a discussion of the MLF.

¹⁵ Schlesinger, *op cit*, p. 798.

President, it began to press for revival of the MLF idea. And so it fell to the 'realists' to re-bury the invalid ('multilateral nuclear *force*,' they called it). A chance remark by Johnson at a staff conference in April 1964, had given the cabal some hope that the President would go ahead with the MLF after the elections in November. The intrigues between 'State' and the White House redoubled.

'So it went, around and around, until, at one point, it occurred to Johnson to ask what his predecessor had felt about all this', Geyelin recounted.¹⁶ 'The answer came from McGeorge Bundy, whose influence as guardian of options and protector of the President was perhaps never more effectively displayed than in the episode of the MLF. Bundy had sensed trouble building earlier in the year. With the MLF partisans in full cry, the President's position uncertain, and the Wilson visit coming up, Bundy had called in Richard Neustadt, a political scientist, a former White House staffer under Harry Truman and consultant to John Kennedy, and an authority on the exercise of Presidential power as well as NATO affairs, for an independent appraisal of the MLF-ANF¹⁷ issue, in Europe as well as Washington. Bundy, while no MLF 'theologian', had nothing particular against the MLF personally. He simply didn't want President Johnson married to it in any sort of shotgun ceremony that he thought the State Department partisans were trying to stage. He did not think the West Germans wanted it nearly as badly as the State Department contended . . . He doubted Harold Wilson was really keen about any new arrangements (*and he had also collected some evidence on this point*) [italics added]. He thought the President ought to have a better reading than he was getting of the possible repercussions in Europe, because this would have an important bearing on the prospects for Senate approval . . . Beyond that, he saw it as his obligation to warn the President of possible pitfalls. . .'

The document below was part of the evidence which Bundy assembled to build his case on MLF. According to Neustadt, who was interviewed privately in August of this year, it was not the product of his 'official' mission to Britain for Bundy in the autumn of 1964 (which Geyelin talks of), but came out of an earlier, 'private' visit to England that June. Neustadt said he was on personal business at that time, and spent some time at Nuffield College, on a grant from the Twentieth Century Fund to make a study of British defence policy in the nineteen-fifties. In 1963, Neustadt had also been in England (he was virtually a commuter in those days) in pursuit of his study of the Skybolt fiasco, which Kennedy had commissioned as a tribute to history and a help for future policy-makers. Neustadt said he wrote the July 1964 memo as a personal project, and sent it to 'friends'—that is, Presidential Assistant McGeorge Bundy. Of course, Bundy distributed it and it was part of the basis for Neustadt's trip back to Britain later that year. The report of that later visit, which was the result of an official commission, is 'classified' and has not been made public. The missions and the reports

¹⁶ Geyelin, *op cit*, pp. 170-171.

¹⁷ Harold Wilson's proposal for an 'Allied (or Atlantic) Nuclear Force', which was to combine MLF with national nuclear forces.

provided the groundwork for the first visit of Prime Minister Wilson to Washington in December 1964.

Neustadt's function in those days was that of a political odd-jobman. Although he was not officially a White House staff member, he was 'on call to the President' while he was serving as professor of Government at Columbia University. For a fee (the going rate was \$75 *per diem*) he would shuttle down to Washington for whatever purposes his talent might serve. There was an office in the Executive Office Building next to the White House, assigned to his use. There, he would busy himself with such matters as Kennedy memorabilia, the history of Skybolt, and European-American relations. 'Dick Neustadt', a former State Department official said recently, 'was a senior proconsul of the Empire.'

Neustadt came to Kennedy's attention in 1960, during the 'transition period between Republican and Democratic Administrations. Kennedy, once chanced to remark that he had read Neustadt's book *Presidential Power* (along with Ian Fleming), and that not only made the book a modest best-seller but propelled Neustadt into a position of some prestige if not actual power. James Reston, perhaps after too quick a read, called the book 'the nearest thing we have in contemporary America to *The Prince*', and Neustadt was thereafter known as America's own Machiavelli. He knows he does not deserve the reputation: 'I'm a second-generation bureaucrat', he once told an interviewer.

Neustadt advised Kennedy on the transition period, and served on various presidential and congressional commissions studying administrative reorganization, campaign finances, the Mutual Security Program, and so forth. Finally he won the directorship of the Kennedy Institute of Politics at Harvard (and an associate deanship at the Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration). His consultancy continued into the Johnson years, and he was always available for a quick 'atmospheric' study of a sticky problem. Former White House 'intellectual-in-residence' John P. Roche recently attested to Neustadt's usefulness: 'Roche said at one time the Government lacked information on politics in Thailand', *The New York Times* reported . . . 'People went there and looked for systems and could not find them. . . They did not see the extension of the family as a power. Richard Neustadt of Harvard went to Thailand for three weeks and looked for functions instead of systems. He produced a six-page memorandum on Thai political systems that was more than the CIA and everybody else had done.'

The material of the memorandum here should be considered in the context of the MLF controversy as a whole. Like Bundy, Neustadt was no 'theologian', but neither had he anything 'against the MLF personally'. While ostensibly a proposal on how to 'sell' the MLF to Britain, it was equally useful as evidence in Bundy's death-kit. To connoisseurs of the inside-dopester style, it is an elegant example of smooth-talking, wit, accuracy of characterization, and instant conceptualization. Neustadt is a master of the coy put-down. But the most interesting stylistic element—raised to political significance—is the

emphasis on 'atmospherics'. To the 'realists', issues and policies are what they seem, and their justification is in their seeming so. What is most frightening is that so much effort (and Neustadt's missions were a tiny part of it) went into something as utterly absurd as the MLF.

Editorial Note

We have printed the following document as it stands, leaving inconsistencies of syntax, etc, and inaccuracies of spelling unaltered.

Sir Henry Hardman was from 1963-4 Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence, 1964-6 Permanent Under Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence, since 1967 has been Governor and Trustee of the Reserve Bank of Rhodesia; Sir Michael Cary was from 1958-61 Assistant Under Secretary at the Air Ministry, 1961-4 Deputy Secretary of the Cabinet, since 1964 has been Second Permanent Under Secretary of State (Navy) at the Ministry of Defence; Arthur Palliser was seconded as a Counsellor in the Diplomatic Service to the Imperial Defence College in 1963, in 1964 he was Head of Planning Staff at the Foreign Office, since 1966 he has been a Private Secretary to the Prime Minister; Sir William Armstrong has been Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury since 1962; Sir Timothy Bligh was from 1959-64 Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, 1964 (August) Deputy Under Secretary of State (Air), since 1966 has been Assistant Managing Director of the Thomson Organization.

document

Memorandum on The British Labour Party and the MLF

Prepared by Richard E. Neustadt

July 6, 1964

Everyone I saw in London during June brought up 'MLF', usually with curses. I looked sympathetic and listened hard, trying to judge whether we might have another 'Skybolt' brewing if Labour comes in: another situation where the differences of interest are compounded by each side's misreading of the pressures and procedures on the other side. I think we might. I also think we have a good chance to avoid it. On both scores, here is why.

What follows has been drawn from conversations with *politicians* (mainly Wilson, Gordon Walker, Healy, Brown, Mulley, Jenkins—and Heath), with *officials* (mainly Hardman, Cary, Palliser, Armstrong, Bligh), and with *spectators* (mainly Gwynn-Jones, Buchan, Beedham, Duchene). Before I left I swapped appraisals at our Embassy with Bruce, Irving and Newman. They will speak for themselves but I think we agree.

I Assessment

Regarding Labour's look at *us* if they win in October and we in November, I think it safe to say that *as of now* both the prospective ministers and the civilian

top officials in MOD, FO and, Number 10, see four things pretty much alike:

1. President Johnson *personally* wants negotiations wrapped up, with the British in if possible, before the CDU right-wing steps up its sneers at Erhardt (and Erler too) in the German campaign period.
2. Otherwise the President confronts a *concrete* 'German problem', a pressing question for which he lacks answers: 'If not MLF, what?'
3. Judged on his form as Senate Leader, our President—newly and well elected—can be expected to press hard for what he feels he needs, and to reward a helping hand but not forget a hindrance.

When Wilson raised the subject at our first talk in mid-June I told him that I understood the President himself did seek to see the MLF brought to fruition, for good reason from his point of view considering where he took up the issue, and that after the two elections Wilson, if in office, might want to ponder Johnson's Senate record. 'Oh', said Wilson, 'a deal.'

But while these things are seen, it does *not* follow that a Labour Government will promptly seek a 'deal'. No member of the front-bench is impressed with MLF in its own terms; none really buys our line on Europe or on Germany; the best of them still pursue McNamara's line of some two years ago; the others flounder. Also, most of them worry about Eastern European reaction. Moreover—more important—all the internal forces in their system press the other way, to put off the issue, or better still (were Johnson willing) to evade it altogether. As viewed in June the pressures for delay *after* a Labour victory include the following:

1. **Transition bureaucratism:** Wilson's first cabinet will be nothing to brag about in terms either of intellect or of experience. He is aware of this and means to take all key decisions into his own hands. He wants not merely to make ultimate decisions but to pass issues through his own mind early, sitting at the centre of a brains-trust, with himself as first brains-truster on the model, he says, of JFK.

This suggests that much of his attention at the start will be devoted to machinery-building and administrative management (it fascinates him) and to getting hold of issues in economic management which may present themselves the moment he takes office. Besides, he has to oversee the drafting of the Queen's Speech (however banal) and the scheduling of work for Parliament (however routine) as it sits after election, unable to rise until the Christmas recess.

Also, more importantly, he has to keep one step ahead of all his colleagues in the precedent-making first encounters and arrangements which set tone and style for their relationships. 'I shall be chairman of the Board, not President,' he says, 'but Managing Director too, and very active at it.'

All these concerns are bound to turn his mind from MLF. Wilson will take office quite unready to decide his course on *that*.

Moreover, at the start of Wilson's Government, the issues posed by MLF will be as unripe for decision as he is unready. His new Ministers fresh from campaigning as an opposition, will confront a deeply divided officialdom which has been marking time in an unprecedented fashion through a long 'American' campaign, and is unsettled further by the prospect of a Cabinet less experienced than any known since 1923.

When officials get their hands on the new Ministers, Foreign Office briefs presumably will urge affirmative response to us (assuming we stand firm) and then hard bargaining with us about terms and conditions (and the name) of the new mixed-manned force. Assuming Gordon Walker is the Foreign Secretary (he almost certainly will be) I expect he will submit with little struggle and become the advocate of his official 'line,' since he seems quite incapable of taking a coherent line himself and has no source of strength, politically, beyond what he can draw from his machine. On the other hand, Defence Ministry briefs presumably will urge resistance to expenditures on seaborne forces and will propose alternatives along the lines worked out for Thorneycroft last month. The Navy still wants Indian Ocean carriers above all else, is reconciled I gather to Polaris submarines, but fears the bite of MLF ships on its manpower and money as much as it once feared those submarines. The Air Force and the Ministry of Aviation (and the industry) are fighting to secure a lasting mission (and orders) for manned aircraft. TRS-2 is to them what the B-70 and SKYBOLT were to USAF. Top Defense civilians, borrowing 'Hitchcraft' from us, find MLF of no account on military grounds and see no budgetary compensation in it, quite the contrary.

Assuming Denis Healy is Defense Secretary (he seems confident he will be), his own interest in a mission East of Suez (and in sales of British aircraft), his mistrust of continentals, his disdain for MLF, comport well with the bulk of these official views. Despite some surface differences on such things as Polaris subs, the likelihood is that this Minister and his machine will find their outlooks basically compatible. They probably will come into agreement rather readily for reasons more substantial than in Gordon Walker's case—which gives Healy an advantage over Walker, an advantage enhanced by intellect and drive.

The prospect then is for perpetuation in the new regime of present differences between FO and MOD on MLF *per se*. The issue will be Wilson's to resolve. Neither Minister could resist him; neither has an independent power base politically.

But this is not an issue to be met in isolation. Budgeting and politics alike require that it be decided in the context of Polaris subs, TRS-2's, carriers, Aden, arms control, East-West 'detente', and Anglo-American relations. This is not the context for snap judgment. Nor is it the context for a judgment based on Healy *versus* Walker. Wilson being Wilson (as above), he'll almost surely want to reach beneath his Ministers to their machines and form his own views before they have frozen theirs. For this he will need time.

Gordon Walker gave me the opinion that a Labour Government could easily be ready to confer with the Americans by late November. Maybe so, in 70 terms. But I asked Cary (now at Navy) when official briefs on East-of-Suez plans could be expected to get serious ministerial attention. His reply: about six weeks after election (early December). I asked Wilson when he thought that Ministers and their machines would be fully engaged with one another and with him. His reply: Christmas recess (late December-January). And I asked Healy when he thought they'd have decided, as a Government, what they might do for us and wanted from us. His reply: late January. Considering how long it took the Tory Government—some four months, I surmise—to bargain out internally their current 'supplementary' MLF proposals, Wilson is an optimist (and Gordon Walker silly).

2. Parliamentary politics: As Wilson now is going, back-bench opposition from his own side to a Labour Government (no other kind of opposition threatens British Cabinets) can arise only on the left. The right will not be troublesome for a long time to come. Its leaders, to a man, will be in office.

A Labour victory should leave the left unorganized and leaderless (Wilson ~~was~~ its leader) with its prospective size unknown either to its own hard-core or to the party leadership—underlying attitudes of many freshman MP's will be hard to gauge.

The problem posed for Wilson by this latent opposition is a matter to be estimated *after* the election. Everything depends upon the size and composition of his overall majority. At present, the 'left-wing' in its most general sense numbers about one-third of Labour MP's, with a hard-core of 15-20 who are often very close indeed to the Communist line. Were Labour to win but a bare majority in Commons, that hard-core could become a pressing problem. Were Labour to sweep in (which nobody expects), the general leftish group might rise to half the party membership (with hosts of screwballs riding on the tide), also a pressing problem. If Labour wins a middle-sized majority, comfortable and not too big (70 is the front-bench ideal), left-wing opposition can become a problem only as the Government decides to make it so by forcing issues which give hard-core leftists wide appeal outside their own ranks.

But MLF may well be such an issue. Krushchev and Zorin are making it so. It is indeed the best such issue, in left terms, now visible on the horizon—far better than Polaris subs which have a solid jingoist appeal, especially now that CND is dead. 'MLF' means literally nothing to the general public now and little more than that to most back-benchers, but it might be made to mean 'pro-German, anti-Russian', when the time comes, with 'American arm-twisting' as an added feature. Hence, the potential wide appeal which won't be lost on leftists.

Whatever the dimensions of his victory, Wilson will need time to assess it, to count noses in the House, to decide which sort of problem he confronts and how he wants to meet it. MLF is inextricably involved in these decisions. The circumstances may suggest an early

challenge to the left for disciplinary purposes, in which case MLF becomes an interesting possibility, one among others. Or the circumstances may suggest leaving the opposition latent and unorganized as long as possible, in which case MLF becomes a sheer embarrassment. In neither case will Wilson want to rush his calculations.

His need for caution can only be enhanced by the status of that other opposition, the official Opposition, the late Government, which will confront him with a front-bench better informed at the outset than his own. Home, Heath, Thorneycroft could not unseat him, but they certainly could embarrass him if he puts a foot wrong.

3. *Pre-election postures*: As of now neither Party seeks to make the MLF a campaign issue. The Tory Cabinet can't afford public commitment *now*, over Thorneycroft's dissent and Mountbatten's scorn. So long as the Government does not officially endorse it, the opposition has no reason to oppose it. And the voters remain free to ignore it, as they do, which suits the front-bench on both sides since both want their hands free after election.

But Wilson, Healy, Gordon Walker, Brown (among others) all have taken personal positions ranging from extremely skeptical to very negative. These, although unnoticed by the *general* public, are on record with assorted special publics: the press corps, back-benchers, continental Socialists, and in Wilson's case, Krushchev. (In the Kremlin he apparently defended us against the charge that MLF was meant to arm the Germans, but he didn't defend MLF as such). Wilson talks of arms control and detente. He and Healy—and especially Gordon Walker—talk of Atlantic consultation on strategy and policy 'up to the final decision on the trigger, which is yours and must remain so.' All three talk of 'getting back to McNamara's doctrine at Ann Arbor, which made sense.' And all this talk, however imprecise, revolves around a *substitute* for MLF: they may be fuzzy on exactly what they do want, but they don't want that—and everyone who cares to listen knows it.

This raises the problem of eating words after election—and the season for *campaign* words hasn't yet begun.

Moreover, in a related sphere, other words which made more public impact may cause quite a lot of pain as the campaign proceeds: words about Polaris subs and the 'independent deterrent'. With one exception, every Labour MP I encountered (about 20) expressed worry over Tory charges two months hence that 'they want to hand our deterrent to Goldwater', a nice point since if he is nominated his defeat will not have happened by the time of their election. Wilson was the exception; he professed himself unworried: 'I'll reply that the Tories have so little judgment as to count Johnson out, and Johnson won't like that.' (How this helps *Wilson* is unclear to me). I asked Heath how he saw the issue. He grinned: 'They got themselves into it, didn't they?'

As things stand even now, I sense little disposition among Labour front-benchers to scrap Polaris if they do come in, though they'd be

glad to scrap Macmillan's escape-clause as a sop to 'Ann Arbor'—and their left—since it is meaningless in substance and they don't need it politically. Indeed, I get the clear impression that the main reason they still toy with cancelling Polaris is that they think ~~we~~ want to end their national deterrent and would pay a price for that—in short, a bargaining point with us. This contrasts oddly with our State Department view that MLF is a 'way out' for them, a way to rid themselves of a political embarrassment. But *CND* is dead, and Tories shortly may be breathing down their necks—and Thorneycroft is trying (via contracts) to give them the easier out of crying '*fait accompli*' after election.

In the whole sphere of nuclear deterrence and allied relations there may be lots of words to eat by next October. The conjunction of our two campaigns helps not at all. Such eating calls for sugar-coating first. And that takes time (and sugar, some of its ours).

4. Dreams of Glory (retrospective): Labour has been out for twelve years. Few of its prospective Cabinet ministers have ever been 'in'. Their vision of the place and power in the world which they hope to assume as HM Government has rather more to do with 1951 than 1964, judging by the overtones when they discuss their prospects. Many of the educative shocks with Tories and officials have encountered in the interim do not seem to have registered in full on these outsiders. Roy Jenkins estimates that it will take a year at least for his frontbenchers, once in office, to get up to date about the 'multi-racial Commonwealth', for instance, let alone 'Europe'. Regarding the Commonwealth, Atlee's old concepts persist, and Wilson says, 'we must make a new try in terms of economics, not politics'. Regarding Europe there is real ambivalence. Wilson and Healy evidently share the deep distrust of Frogs and Wogs (to say nothing of Huns) which was characteristic of Atlee, Bevin, even Gaitskell—and remains in character for lots of Labour voters. On the other hand, temptations toward a continental policy, free from Americans, are never wholly lacking and might grow apace if only there were socialist regimes to join. Healy can't play Thorneycroft and knows it, but I gather that he does think now and then of what it would be like (at least for bargaining with us) if there were Social Democrats in power on the Continent.

And Wilson evidently has his own dreams of a role as honest broker in East-West relations (shades of 1945). Currently he is 'the man who knows Krushchev.'

Power breeds realism, no doubt. But there *is* a gestation period. Meanwhile, Her Majesty's new Ministers are bound to be a rather proud and touchy lot, mindful of prerogatives and eager to believe that they have other options than a deal with us.

To summarize the foregoing four points: there will be no internal pressures on a Labour Government after election to spur it toward an early deal with us. Quite the contrary. The *only* spur we can expect is their perception of our need and fixed intention to proceed with *or* without them.

Accordingly, the first thing they will test is our intention, in the context of events after our own election. Although they know ~~now~~ that the President wants MLF, they'll seek to satisfy themselves that he still wants it. Maybe events in Southeast Asia, say, or in East-West relations, will have altered his priorities. Or maybe he's been firm only because of a 'one-sided presentation' from the 'cabal' (British for Rostow, Owen, Schachtel, Bowie, whose positions are identified and classified in London). Maybe he would shift ground in the winter if he heard 'the other side' presented properly by Labour (a Healy speculation).

If and as their testing shows us still determined, then and only then will they turn their minds in full seriousness to the key questions: What is the least they have to do for Johnson? and What is the most they might get in return?

Subsumed under the first of these two questions are at least three issues on which nobody in Labour ~~now~~ appears to have a firm grip or a clear understanding: Would we really go ahead without them, even if Rome held out too? Would we really assent to a voting formula which risks ~~their~~ veto over ~~our~~ abandonment of our veto? Does it take a German-sized financial contribution to obtain full voting status, and if so what else but money might be made to count? After election, when they try to gauge our 'quid', these issues will come up for clarification.

Regarding the second question, the 'quo' in any bargain, shadow-ministers ~~now~~ voice assorted notions, none of them precise, none 'jelled'. Few of these are firmly held, some are scarcely serious, but all together do suggest the range within which they'll begin to think after election. These notions include the following (items are ~~not~~ mutually exclusive):

1. A new disarmament approach to the Soviets *before* decision on an allied mixed-manned force.
2. New inter-allied consultative mechanisms (*and symbols*) as substitute (or supplement) for any mixed-manned force.
3. A mixed-manned force of aircraft, Pershings, ground forces, what-have-you, with few if any surface ships to start (variations on the present Government's proposal).
4. With any mixed-manned force, assurance of some form of us veto into perpetuity (or of British veto over our withdrawal from our veto).
5. American orders for British aircraft, or some variant which serves the same purposes (unless these have been served by item three above).
6. American support for and assistance to new forms of British presence East of Suez—carriers, etcetera—including diplomatic support with Nasser for an unimpeded, unexploited, phase-out from the Aden base.

Beyond these notions one goes around the world, touching speculatively on South-east Asia (including Indonesia), British Guiana, Cuba, and the like, as places where the us might be threatened or the UK rewarded in the course of bargaining over MLF. The talk grows less substantial as one goes.

But in the talk there is a hint: if we harm them, they are not without resources to retaliate in kind. Whether ~~we~~ think they actually can afford to hurt us matters less than whether *they* think they can. As of now they do.

David Bruce predicts that Wilson almost surely will try out on Johnson item two above (consultative machinery), perhaps combined with item one (disarmament talks) as a substitute for MLF. Only when Johnson said 'no' *except* in the context of action on MLF would Wilson come to grips with other items on this list and seriously contemplate a deal. Bruce thus suggests that a two-stage negotiation is in prospect, with Wilson being turned down at the first stage. Such an outcome adds materially to the risks of Skybolt-type misunderstandings. We should improve upon this prospect if we can.

II Recommendations

Wilson told me that after the two elections he expects to bring a team to Washington, introducing the régimes to one another in the context of exploratory talks across-the-board, 'as Macmillan did with Eisenhower in 1957.' Regarding Britain and the MLF, we should begin to plan *now* for the timing and the content of those talks. I suggest the following:

1. **Pre-election restraint:** We've got one message across: Johnson wants MLF and if they seek fruitful Anglo-American relations (as they must) they'll have to reckon with that fact. Enough argued for the time being. Americans should now confine themselves to listening. Let *Englishmen* like Harlech, Gwynn-Jones, and other close observers needle Wilson and the rest on how to do their reckoning. *We* should not be caught with needles in our hands. Especially not members of the 'cabal'. At the same time, we should—of course—keep contact. We need to know as best we can what reckoning they do, or leave undone, and why, before election.

2. **Post-election gestures:** If Wilson is elected in October, Johnson (still running) can't do much more than send formal congratulations. But immediately after *our* election, the President—assuming he remains of the same mind on MLF—might well send Wilson a warm, personal communication, inviting him to come and bring his team for talks in every sphere, 'as soon as you are ready,' perhaps suggesting the last week in January 'after Inaugural', as a good time, and saying with respect to the defense sphere that Johnson is determined to get action on the MLF, if possible in company with Wilson: no pressure, no gun-to-the-head on timing, but explicit determination.

This letter should be hand-carried, preferably by Mac Bundy (cover story: 'arrangements for a meeting,' with a one-day trip to Bonn regarding further meetings, if need be). Wilson and his colleagues regard Bundy as close to the President, completely reliable, and not a 'cabal' member. A cabinet officer would be too prominent, a 'cabal' member fatal. Bundy is our best bet. He could effectively enlarge upon the message that he carried in at least the following respects:

a. our interest in their cancellation of Polaris sub. If we *haven't* any

interest and it's *not* a bargaining point with us, the sooner they know that the better.

b. our view on trading off the MLF for something from the Russians which would interest the Germans. If we think there is no prospect of a useful exploration until after we have got MLF launched, the sooner they know that the better. And the sooner they know what we think the Russian 'quo' might have to be, the likelier they are to see our point on timing.

c. our view on consummating MLF without them if need be, however much we'd rather have them in. If we really mean to go ahead should they find, after reasonable thought and talk, that they can't join, the sooner the better again.

A Bundy trip conceivably could save us the whole first stage of Bruce's predicted two-stage negotiation.

3. **Planning for a deal:** We have four months before we can make post-election contracts. This is ample time to clarify our own minds on the range of responses we could make to Wilson's probable requests. When we see how *his* reckoning progresses we can adjust our planned responses, provided we have planned them in advance. We might start by identifying every element of bureaucratic, political and personal pressure *against* MLF, which Wilson once in office may encounter, and then see what we could devise to temper each such element, as follows:

a. **The British Navy East of Suez:** Do we want a Western presence of substantial capability in the Indian Ocean area? Are we prepared to see it wear a British label, thus perpetuating a non-European mission for Great Britain? If so, here is a promising route to a new joint venture, linking our interests for years ahead in a relationship which can't be criticized on grounds that it discriminates against the rest of Europe. British resources alone, even in the most ambitious Naval plans, evidently won't produce a force which could do more than enter friendly harbors, on request, for police actions. But British naval hearts, I *think*, would quicken to the notion of a layer mission under British management with joint support. Healy's interests would, I *think*, become engaged. And even if we did no more than befriend a restricted British presence, our support, if tangible, might ease the pain of MLF in British naval circles. Either way, what support could we offer?

b. **The British Aircraft Industry:** RAF is eager for TSR-2 as a matter of manned-bombership. The Ministries of Defense and Aviation accept the idea of its multilateralization to produce more orders, thereby cutting unit costs and adding work for British manufacturers. This expensive, problematical new weapon (still under development) locks up a lot of defense funds which otherwise might cover MLF and carriers too. But TSR-2 also is the only thing in sight to sustain Britain's aviation industry. This is the crux of the matter. RAF aside, the interests of those Ministries (and of Wilson's projected Ministry of Technology) run with new orders—and employment—for that industry. Either in the context of a mixed-manned force or separately, new orders for *some* aircraft (whether TSR-2 or not) would compensate these interests for support of MLF. This is virtually sure to be an item in their bargaining.

Granting our own industry's concerns, what might we do for theirs?

c. **The American Veto:** Labour front-benchers say they'd never take a control formula for MLF which hints at an American withdrawal (their eyes are on back-benchers, and on anti-Germans, and on Moscow). But Germans—and Europeans—want to point toward the day when a United Europe could 'buy us out'. Their need to do so must be balanced against Labour's need to say 'not without British consent'. My *guess* is that a form of words which subjects changes in control, a dropping of *our* veto, to consent by every member (thus to HMG's consent) will do the trick especially if Wilson could go home and claim a victory while Erhardt could express himself still satisfied. Have we the words to produce this result?

d. **Consultative Mechanisms:** A Labour Government will need some symbols both for public satisfaction for Gordon Walker's *amour propre* (to say nothing of Wilson's). But it presumably could also use some substance and the closer symbols can relate to substance the better. Symbolically, if there are British colonels now at Omaha, could we have them ostentatiously replaced by generals? If the Berlin task force is a useful mechanism, could we ostentatiously enlarge its mandate? If the Board of Governors of MLF is to preside over a nuclear force, could we formally put it into the business of discussing allied strategy, or arms control, or both? Other comparable questions will suggest themselves. Substantively, I would hope there is some real work to be done behind facades like these. And perhaps we could go beyond these to some further ventures of decided usefulness to Britain in real terms even if not symbolically. I think particularly of a joint review from ministry to ministry concerning our projected force levels, roles, missions around the world, with Bonn's Defense Ministry brought in for a tripartite look at Europe. Conceivably this might become an annual exercise geared to our respective 'budget seasons'. Whether publicized or not it would have undoubted meaning, substantively, for the British (there's more in it for them than for us). Is this something else Wilson might gain from talks with us?

e. **East-West Relations:** Wilson will need protection from the charge that by support for MLF he enters a pro-German, anti-Soviet, anti-detente, capitalist plot. He will also need to be convinced in his own mind that he is doing no such things, and that the Russians know it. How do we *convince* him, once we have informed him (if we do) that consummation of the MLF must precede any thought of explorations looking toward a trade-off with the Soviets? I think of several things which might well help. He'll want to tell the President about Krushchev; the President could listen with attentive interest. He'll want to hear the President discourse upon the cause of reduced tension, East and West, with as much seriousness as the late President displayed to him in April 1963. This should be no problem. As a Kremlinologist he'll want to hear strong reasons why that cause can be *advanced* by action on the MLF. He'll want to hear them because if he makes a deal with us, he'll need to use them. And he'll want the MLF he joins to wear a different look—perhaps be called a different name—than it has worn since Moscow started to attack it. This as a matter of conviction and protection. These things do not exhaust the list. What else? Or what instead?

f. **Atmospherics:** Wilson's first contact with Anglo-American re-

lations came in the Second World War, when he was a young civil servant. His last official contact came in Atlee's government. As Prime Minister I would expect him to arrive in Washington with recollections of the Anglo-American relationship and hopes for his own personal relationship which are quite different from perceptions of reality held by many American officials. Numbers of things can be done on the cheap to avoid shocking his sensibilities. For one, the President might ask his advice on a short list of replacements for David Bruce. For another, Averell Harriman might figure prominently among his hosts. If these don't serve there are sure to be others. They are worth thought and attention.

These suggestions all rest on one underlying premise, that it will be worth our while to ease the path for Wilson, pay him a good price, leave him no possible excuse we can foresee for failing to proceed toward MLF in company with us and with the Germans. That assumption is subject to challenge, I know. I make it because I surmise that if we get over this hurdle in good style, the stage will be well set not only for effective Anglo-American relations but for increasingly productive Anglo-German ones. And I can think of nothing likelier to speed a Labour Government's approach toward the European *and* Atlantic attitudes *in* favor, than productive, firm relations both with Washington and Bonn. There is, besides, an opposite side to the coin. And I don't like the look of *that*.

R.E.N.

Introduction to Gramsci

1919-1920

The impact of the Bolshevik Revolution and the aftermath of the First World War transformed Western and Eastern Europe after 1918 into a storm-zone of unrest that has never since been equalled. A wave of political and industrial insurgency unfurled across the continent: this was the time of the insurrection in Berlin, the Soviet in Munich, the Commune in Budapest, the general strike in Vienna, the rising in Vratsa and Plovdiv, and the factory occupations of Turin. For a few brief years, the whole capitalist order seemed on the verge of a revolutionary overthrow. The most spectacular episodes of this international upheaval were the revolt in which Luxemburg and Liebknecht were assassinated, the adventure from which Dimitrov escaped, and the debacle of proletarian power which made Lukács an exile for thirty years. But the mass struggles which were richest in theoretical developments were those of the young working class of Turin, whose age and composition so closely resembled that of the proletariat of Petrograd (Fiat/Putilov). Antonio Gramsci, editor of *L'Ordine Nuovo* from 1919 to 1920, was its spokesman. Gramsci's early writings on workers' councils, trade unions, political parties and the State are a product of the great revolutionary turmoil of Northern Italy after 1918.¹

Gramsci was 28 when, together with Palmiro Togliatti, he captured control of the newly-founded weekly *L'Ordine Nuovo*. He immediately published, on June 20th 1919, an editorial calling for the creation of Factory Councils in Turin. Its title—*Democrazia Operaia*—was already a programme. Gramsci urged the transformation of the limited 'internal commissions' which had existed in Turinese industry since Italy's entry into the First World War, into democratic workers' councils embracing all the workers in every plant. The response to his appeal was immediate and enthusiastic: within six months, by December 1919, 150,000 Turinese workers were organized in Councils. There have been few occasions in socialist history when a theoretical initiative by an intellectual worker (Gramsci was not a political leader at this time) has been so massively and instantaneously adopted by industrial workers. The Factory Councils were composed of commissars elected from each work-team in the plant. They were like the representatives of the Paris Commune—revocable by referendum at any moment.

¹ For further reading, see Paolo Spriano's Introduction to '*L'Ordine Nuovo*' (1919-1920), Einaudi 1963, and *L'Occupazione delle fabbriche*, Einaudi 1964; Giuseppe Berti's introductory essay to *I primi dieci anni di vita del Partito Comunista Italiano*, Feltrinelli Annali 1966; Giuseppe Fiori, *Vita di Antonio Gramsci*, Laterza 1966. Gramsci's writings are published by Einaudi in 12 volumes (the last of which, covering the period 1922-1926, is due later this year). A good selection of his pre-prison articles makes up the second volume, *Nel tempo della lotta* (1914-1926), of the as yet incomplete four-volume anthology *2000 pagine di Gramsci*, Il Saggiatore 1964, this anthology is well-edited, with useful introductory material. The best studies to have appeared in English are *Antonio Gramsci and the origins of Italian Communism*; John M. Cammett, Stanford University Press 1967; and John Merrington's essay in *Socialist Register* 1968.

Democratic control by the workers themselves of their own councils was explicitly conceived as a counterforce to the restricted and bureaucratized Italian trade unions. The fundamental task of the Councils were to build workers' power in the factories and to foster a revolutionary culture of producers preparatory to national victory by the proletariat. The Councils soon showed their vitality and combativity as weapons of class struggle.

In March 1920, the Italian employers reconstituted the General Confederation of Industry (Confindustria) to mobilize for the repression of the working class movement: its secretary, Olivetti, declared that the Councils must be destroyed. Troops were deployed to encircle Turin. A month later, a dispute over daylight saving time (changing clocks) at a Fiat works was seized by the employers as a pretext to proclaim a lock-out. They then demanded the reversion of the Councils to the old status of internal commissions, as a condition of settlement. Confronted with this clear bid to smash the basis of mass militancy in the city, the Turin Chamber of Labour, the engineering workers' union (FIOM) and the Socialist Party (PSI) declared a general strike. 500,000 industrial and agricultural workers stopped work and the whole of Piedmont came to a standstill. But the national leadership of the PSI and the Confederation of Labour (CGL) refused to give any assistance to the strike, which thus remained trapped in its provincial stronghold. After eleven days, the Turinese working class was forced to admit defeat, and work was resumed. The Factory Councils were not, however, abolished as the employers had planned.

Four months later, battle was engaged again, this time on a yet grander scale. On August 16th the engineering workers' union in Milan ordered a work-to-rule when the employers broke off wage negotiations. This was a new weapon in Italy. The employers reacted violently. The lead was given by the Alfa-Romeo plant which ordered a lock-out in reprisal. The workers immediately occupied the factory: everywhere in Milan fellow-workers followed their example. Two days later, on September 1st 1920 the big metallurgical plants in Turin were occupied; then the movement spread to most of Italian heavy industry, and some sectors of light industry. Turin rapidly became the vortex of the movement, which assumed the character of a general challenge to capitalist society as a whole. The Factory Councils controlled production within the factories, while protecting the plant from counter-attack by organizing Red Guards. Great efforts were made to maintain output. Armed workers in Turin clashed with the city's security forces. The question of power had clearly been posed on a national scale.

At this climactic moment of social crisis and mass working-class upsurge, the CGL passed responsibility for all decisions to the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party thereupon abdicated, requesting the CGL to poll its members as to whether they opted for negotiations or an immediate move towards revolution. A referendum was organized, which predictably endorsed the official CGL policy of negotiations (by a narrow majority). An economist settlement was reached with the employers, by the mediation of the Prime Minister Giolitti, who even insisted on the introduction in Parliament of a bill ratifying the

'principle' of workers' control.² Another referendum in the unions was then organized to secure endorsement of the settlement. Between September 25-30 the occupations ceased. The Italian working class, deliberately abandoned by its political party for a hypocritical electoralism at the supreme hour of its struggle, had suffered a catastrophic defeat. The Italian bourgeoisie had now witnessed its ardour and power, but had been left intact; the immense social fear that resulted produced fascism. Mussolini's movement became a major political force immediately after the end of the occupations.

The parallel between the fate of the great wave of occupations in Italy and that of the recent occupations in France needs no emphasis: it is cruelly evident. Gramsci's writings in these critical years assume a special reverberation after the events of May 1968. They deserve close study throughout the revolutionary Left. Gramsci's thought had not matured by 1920. It will be seen that there are important errors in his writings of this period. But they form a matchless document of the mass struggles of the time, and raise some of the central issues for a contemporary Marxist theory of the socialist revolution in the West. These essays were the practical-critical preliminary to the mature Gramsci of the *Prison Notebooks*: the rupture formed by the later work occurs within a theoretical space already traced by them.

Gramsci's Turin texts centre on the problem of working-class democracy and the socialist State. He saw the Factory Councils as the local model of the future dictatorship of the proletariat: Italian Soviets which could already begin to extend their power within industry. The basis of this theory was his distinction between the party and trade-union as voluntary and contractual organizations, grouping the vanguard of the working class, and the State as the universal association of all producers. A worker had to decide to become a member of the former: he was of right a participant in the latter. Gramsci insisted that the Councils in Turin include all workers, no matter what their political formation or outlook, and combatted any tendency to exclude anarchists—the traditional adversaries of the Italian Socialist Party. The Constitution of the Councils was inspired by this rigorous conception of proletarian democracy: the revocable mandates which Marx has exalted in the Paris Commune and Lenin had approved in *State and Revolution* were given practical form. Gramsci's emphasis on this principle is an affirmation of the autonomy and creativity of the working class, which for him far surpassed in its potential the bureaucratized routines of trade-unionism.

This creativity, embodied in the Councils, had four distinct but simultaneous manifestations for Gramsci.

1. It was a stormy political militancy in the class struggle against capitalism. This militancy constantly tended to overflow the limits of trade union demands, and to pose the question of revolution. 'By its revolutionary spontaneity, the Council tends to unleash the class war at any moment; by its bureaucratic form, the trade-union tends to prevent the class war from ever being unleashed'.³

² cf. de Gaulle's advocacy of workers' 'participation'.

³ See below: *Unions and Councils*—II.

2. It was an incipient reappropriation of work and its product within the factory. 'In so far as it builds this representative apparatus, the working class effectively completes the expropriation of the primary machine, of the most important instrument of production: the working class itself. It thereby rediscovers itself, acquiring consciousness of its organic unity and counterposing itself as one united whole to capitalism'.⁴ Gramsci here clearly introduces the theme of 'alienation' and its supersession, at a time when Marx's early writings were unknown in Europe; apart from him only Lukács was to develop a comparable theory—a year later. Gramsci thus constantly emphasised 'the joyous consciousness' of 'work for use and the disinterested production of social wealth' whereby the working class affirmed 'its sovereignty' and 'its power and freedom as a creator of history'.

3. Gramsci, however, not only stressed the socialist revolution as a triumph over alienation: he also explicitly identified the working class as the fundamental 'productive force' which is imprisoned by capitalist relations of production. The significance of this equation is obvious today, when an important current of Marxist theory sharply separates the 'objective' contradiction: forces/relations of production (economic crises) from the 'subjective' contradiction: bourgeoisie/proletariat (class struggle) and argues that the one may be operative when the other is latent, and vice-versa.⁵ Gramsci's formula, by contrast, is that 'the new productive forces' are 'what we summarize by the expression: proletariat' and that therefore 'the maximum speed' of the revolution is simultaneously the 'greatest liberation' of these forces of production. It is probably no accident that 50 years later, the great upsurge of factory occupations in France has produced exactly the same identification, after a long interval. Glucksmann's *Stratégie et Révolution en France* 1968—one of the most important theoretical works to emerge so far from the French events—spontaneously re-discovers the same language: the workers and students on the barricades represent 'the revolt of the ensemble of modern productive forces against bourgeois relations of production'.⁶

4. Lastly, the Councils performed a role which found expression in Gramsci's conception of a 'new order'. This characteristic theme, which gave its title to his weekly, represented a permanent preoccupation for Gramsci thereafter. The proletariat had to accomplish 'two revolutions'—one destroying the bourgeois State, the other constructing a liberated social system. The latter was the more difficult, as recent tragic defeats in Bavaria and Hungary bore witness. The Italian working class must therefore start to train itself as the future governing class, architect of a society without precedent, here and now. The Council was its apprenticeship. It was a system of 'workers' democracy' that should be 'a magnificent school of political and administrative experience', which 'would give a permanent form and discipline to the masses'.⁷ The experience of power in the factory thus had a cultural function, in the deepest meaning of the word, preparing and

⁴ See below: *The Factory Council*.

⁵ Maurice Godelier's *Rationalité et Irrationalité en Économie* is the most extreme version of this argument.

⁶ *Stratégie et Révolution en France* 1968, André Glucksmann p. 128.

⁷ See below: *Workers' Democracy*.

educating the working class to its immense future responsibilities

Detonation of revolution, reappropriation of labour, liberation of productivity and rehearsal of power—the Council united all these moments. Gramsci's programme was an original and powerful one. But it was soon subjected to a searching criticism by the facts.

In 1919 Gramsci counterposed the Workers' Council to the Party: only the former was the true 'form of the revolutionary process'. Gramsci's view of the party at this time was heavily influenced by his own experience of the PSI, of which he was a member, and by the example of the SPD in Germany and Austria. The PSI had not compromised itself with the social-chauvinism of European Social-Democracy in 1914, and emerged from the war stronger than ever. But it had never become transformed into a revolutionary party, and basically confined its activities to parliamentary agitation and propaganda work. The SPD in Germany and Austria, on the other hand, having participated in the imperialist war, then deliberately stifled the revolutionary upsurge of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils after the war, by taking them over from above and converting them into rubber stamps of its own bureaucratic will (a process particularly perfected by the more skilful Austrian party). Gramsci was determined to prevent any repetition of this process in Italy. Hence his insistent warnings against any party or trade union manipulation of the Factory Councils. At the same time, it is evident that the only positive role he conceived for a socialist party was an idealized mirror of the current practice of the PSI. Thus he argued that the party (like the trade union) was a product of capitalism—a competitive organization fashioned for an exchange society whose political form was parliamentary democracy. In this arena, its essential function was ideological: it should be an 'incorporeal government', a 'radiation of prestige'—not an iron organization of revolutionary combat. The radical inadequacy of this conception was soon demonstrated. The spontaneous wave of factory occupations in 1920 created a revolutionary situation in Italy. But there was no revolutionary party—no dynamic and disciplined vanguard—which alone could have seized power and destroyed the bourgeois State. The collapse of the PSI at the moment of crisis threw into unmistakeable relief the inability of the factory councils by themselves to achieve the revolution of which Gramsci had believed they were the 'true form'. It became clear that Gramsci had telescoped the problem of the socialist State *after* the revolution with the problem of working class organization *before* the revolution. The illusion of achieving dominant economic power prior to the seizure of national political power was dramatically exploded. The theoretical error of Gramsci's conception indeed became ironically concrete. The workers in September 1920 preoccupied themselves with maintaining production (an impossible goal anyway) in the factories they occupied, to prove their technical capacity as 'the most advanced productive forces'; to set them such an aim was completely irrelevant in the crisis. They should, of course, have been mobilizing for armed insurrection in the streets. The absence of a theory of *insurrection* is, in fact, the missing link in the whole of Gramsci's early writings. He devoted only one essay to it—"The Question of Force"—which demonstrates this central flaw graphically. For Gramsci projected the whole problem outside the

arena of working-class struggle altogether, onto the shoulders of the anarchic peasantry. They alone, he wrote, could defeat and disperse the military forces of the capitalist State, leaving the urban working class to inherit power in the cities. This convenient solution, based on an inaccurate analogy with the Russian Revolution, was an evasion of responsibility. It was consistent with Gramsci's conception of the party at the time that in this essay he should merely demand that it ask parliamentary questions about troop dispositions, rather than forestall counter-revolution with a planned assault on power. Gramsci, who had not yet been able to read much of Lenin's work (as he complains in his later critique of the PSI), had not yet grasped Lenin's central maxim for a revolutionary party already present in 'What is to be Done?'—that the Party should be 'ready for *everything*', above all, 'the preparation, timing and execution of the *national armed insurrection*'.⁸

The defeat of the Turin occupations in September 1920 brought home this lesson to Gramsci. Thereafter, his life and work changed. His immediate reaction to the mistakes of his programme for the Factory Councils was a ferocious Jacobinism, whose images recall the provincial Commissioners of Public Safety of the French Revolution, vested with absolute powers and subject to absolute penalties if they failed in their missions: 'A revolutionary movement can only be based on the proletarian vanguard, and must be led without prior consultation, without the apparatus of representative assemblies. Revolution is like war; it must be minutely prepared by a working class general staff, just as a war by the Army's general staff: assemblies can only ratify what has already taken place, exalt the successful and implacably punish the unsuccessful.' Henceforward all Gramsci's energies and reflections were concentrated on the problem of creating the revolutionary party. The last two essays published here mark the decisive shift to a Leninist problematic, whose practical expression was Gramsci's participation in the founding of the Italian Communist Party at the Livorno Congress in 1921 and his subsequent assumption of the leadership of the Party, as the Italian detachment of the Third International.

Gramsci never abandoned his belief in working-class democracy, any more than did Lenin when he wrote *What is to be Done?*, prolegomenon and complement to his demand in *State and Revolution* for the most radical popular democracy from below. But after the Turin experience, Gramsci understood its dialectical temporality. He no longer believed in an immediate ascension from factory councils to the socialist state. The party, which alone could *make* the revolution, now intervened. The role of the peasantry was reformulated in his later work in the notion of a new historical bloc. The preoccupation with proletarian democracy became an acerbic critique of bureaucratic centralism. The creativity and autonomy of the working class were resituated in a concept absent from the early writings: hegemony. All of these ideas were integrated under the aegis of a general theory of the Marxist party—the Modern Prince. In Gramsci's mature theory after 1921, *politics* is always in command—that politics which, he wrote, always has 'a military substratum'. The lessons of his experience have yet to be invalidated.

⁸ *What is to be done?* p. 265. Lenin's italics.

Soviets in Italy

1 Workers' Democracy

An urgent problem today faces every socialist with a lively sense of the historical responsibility that rests on the working class and on the Party which represents the critical and active consciousness of the mission of this class.

How are the immense social forces unleashed by the War to be harnessed? How are they to be disciplined and given a political form which has the potential to develop and grow continuously into the basis of the socialist State in which the dictatorship of the proletariat is embodied? How is the present to be welded to the future, satisfying the urgent necessities of the one and working effectively to create and 'anticipate' the other?

The aim of this article is to stimulate thought and action. It is an invitation to the best and most conscious workers to reflect on the problem and collaborate—each in the sphere of his own competence and activity—towards its solution, by

focusing the attention of their comrades and associations on it. Only common solidarity in a work of clarification, persuasion and mutual education will produce concrete, constructive action.

The socialist State already exists potentially in the institutions of social life characteristic of the exploited working class. To link these institutions together, co-ordinating and ordering them in a highly centralized hierarchy of instances and powers, while respecting the indispensable autonomy and articulation of each, means creating a true and representative workers' democracy here and now. Such a democracy should be effectively and actively opposed to the bourgeois State, and already prepared to replace it in all its essential functions of administration and control of the national heritage.

Today, the workers' movement is led by the Socialist Party and the Confederation of Labour.¹ But for the great mass of workers, the exercise of the social power of the Party and the Confederation is only achieved indirectly, by prestige and enthusiasm, authoritarian pressure and even inertia. The scope of the Party's prestige widens daily, spreading to previously unexplored popular strata; it wins consent and a desire to work effectively for the advent of Communism among groups and individuals which have never previously participated in political struggle. These disorderly and chaotic energies must be given permanent form and discipline. They must be organized and strengthened, making the proletarian and semi-proletarian class an organized society that can educate itself, gain experience and acquire a responsible consciousness of the duties that fall to a class that achieves State power.

Only many years of decades of work will enable the Socialist Party and the trade unions to absorb the whole of the working class. These two institutions cannot be identified immediately with the proletarian State. In fact, in the Communist Republics, they have continued to survive independently of the State, as institutions of propulsion (the Party) or of control and partial implementation (the unions). The Party must continue as the organ of Communist education, the dynamo of faith, the depository of doctrine, the supreme power harmonizing and leading towards their goal the organized and disciplined forces of the working class and the peasantry. Precisely because it must strictly carry out this task, the Party cannot throw open its doors to an invasion of new members, unused to the exercise of responsibility and discipline.

¹ Founded at Genoa in 1892, The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) represented the Second International in Italy. Unlike its French and German equivalents, it did not support the entry of Italy into the War in May 1915, but neither did it adopt a Zimmerwaldist attitude. The result was that it survived the War with the three wings characteristic of pre-War Socialist Parties: a reformist wing on the right; a 'maximalist' (orthodox) centre; and a revolutionary wing on the left. The General Confederation of Labour (CGL) was the Socialist federation of trade unions. Founded in 1906, its pre-war membership rose to 384,000, about half the organized workers in Italy. After the War, the CGL membership rose rapidly to 2,000,000; its Catholic (CNI) and syndicalist (USI) counterparts claimed 1,160,000 and 800,000 members respectively. The CGL was dominated by reformists like its post-War secretary, D'Aragnone.

But the social life of the working class is rich in institutions, is articulated by a multiplicity of activities. These precisely demand development, co-ordination, and interconnection in a broad and flexible system that will include and order the entire working class.

The workshop with its internal commissions,² the socialist circles and the peasant communities are the centres of proletarian life in which we must work directly.

The internal commissions are organs of workers' democracy which must be freed from the limitations imposed on them by the management, and infused with new life and energy. Today, the internal commissions limit the power of the capitalist in the factory and perform functions of arbitration and discipline. Tomorrow, developed and enriched, they must be the organs of proletarian power, replacing the capitalist in all his useful functions of management and administration.

The workers should proceed forthwith to the election of vast delegate assemblies, chosen from their best and most conscious comrades, under the slogan: 'All Power in the Workshop to the Workshop Committee', co-ordinating this slogan with another: 'All State Power to the Workers' and Peasants' Councils'.

A vast field of concrete revolutionary propaganda would open up before the Communists organized in the Party and in the ward circles. In accord with the urban sections, the ward circles should make a survey of the workers' forces in their zone, and become the seat of the ward council of workshop delegates, the ganglion that knits together and centralizes all the proletarian energies of the ward. The system of elections could be varied according to the size of the ward, but the aim should be to get one delegate elected for every 15 workers, divided into categories (as in English factories), arriving by electoral stages at a committee of factory delegates which included representatives of the whole work process (manual workers, clerical workers, technicians). The ward committee should also try to include delegates from the other categories of workers living in the ward: servants, coachmen, tram-drivers, railway workers, road-sweepers, private employees, clerks, and others.

The ward committee should be an expression of *the whole working class* living in the ward, a legitimate and authoritative expression that commands respect for a discipline invested with spontaneously delegated power, and that can order the immediate, integral cessation of all work throughout the ward.

The ward committees should be enlarged into urban commissions,

² '*Commissioni interne*': roughly equivalent to the shop steward committees set up in Britain during the First World War. The internal commissions had long been demanded by the engineering workers' union (FIOM) in Turin before they were acknowledged by the government (but not fully by the employers) in 1915. Most were dominated by revolutionary workers, though a few were tools of the management.

controlled and disciplined by the Socialist Party and the craft federations.

Such a system of workers' democracy (integrated with the corresponding peasant organizations) would give a permanent form and discipline to the masses. It would be a magnificent school of political and administrative experience, and it would incorporate the masses into its framework down to the last man, so that tenacity and perseverance become habitual for them, and they get used to regarding themselves as an army in the field which needs a strict cohesion if it is not to be destroyed and reduced to slavery.

Each factory would constitute one or more regiments of this army, with its commanders, its interconnecting services, its general staff, whose power will be delegated by free election, not imposed in an authoritarian fashion. Assemblies, held within the workshop, and ceaseless propaganda and persuasion by the most highly conscious elements, should radically transform the workers' psychology. It should increase the readiness and capacity of the masses for the exercise of power, and diffuse a consciousness of the rights and duties of comrade and worker that is concrete and effective, since it has been spontaneously generated from living historical experience.

As we have said, these brief proposals have been put forward only to stimulate thought and action. Every aspect of the problem deserves coherent subsidiary treatment, elucidation and integration, in breadth and depth. But the concrete, integral solution of the problems of socialist life can only arise from Communist practice: collective discussion, sympathetically modifying consciousness, unifying it and inspiring it with active enthusiasm. It is a Communist and revolutionary act to tell the truth, to arrive together at the truth. The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' must cease to be a mere formula, an occasion for showy revolutionary phraseology. He who wants the end must also want the means. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the installation of a new, typically proletarian State, which will bring together the institutional experiences of the oppressed class and make the social life of the working class and the peasantry a highly organized and extensive system. This State cannot be improvised; the Russian Bolshevik government laboured eight months to diffuse and concretize the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets', and the Russian workers had known Soviets since 1905. Italian Communists must treasure the Russian experience and save time and labour: the work of reconstruction itself will demand so much time and so much labour that every day, every act must be devoted to it.

21 JAN 1919.

2 The Factory Council

The proletarian revolution is not the arbitrary act of an organization that asserts itself to be revolutionary, or a system of organizations that assert themselves to be revolutionary. The proletarian revolution is a very long historical process that manifests itself in the rise and growth

of determinate forces of production (which we summarize by the expression: 'proletariat') in a determinate historical context (which we summarize by the expressions: 'private property, capitalist mode of production, factory system, organization of society in a democratic-parliamentary state'). In a given phase of this process, the new productive forces are unable to develop or to organize themselves autonomously within the official order of the human community. Then the revolutionary act occurs: it is a direct bid to overthrow this order of things violently, to destroy the whole apparatus of economic and political power in which revolutionary productive forces are oppressively constricted. The revolutionary act is also a direct bid to overthrow the machinery of the bourgeois State and to construct a type of State in which liberated productive forces find both the adequate form for their further development and expansion, and the necessary fortress and weaponry to suppress their adversaries.

The true process of the proletarian revolution cannot be identified with the development and action of revolutionary organizations of a voluntary and contractual type, such as the political party or the trade unions. These are organizations born on the terrain of bourgeois democracy and political liberty, as an affirmation and development of political freedom. These organizations, in so far as they both embody a doctrine which interprets the revolutionary process and predicts its development (within certain limits of historical probability), and are acknowledged by the broad masses as their expression and embryonic apparatus of government, are—increasingly so—the direct and responsible agents of the successive acts of liberation which the whole working class will launch in the course of the revolutionary process. But all the same they do not incarnate this process. They do not supersede the bourgeois State: they do not and cannot embrace the multiple epicentres of revolution which capitalism throws up in its implacable path as a machine of exploitation and oppression.

During the economic and political predominance of the bourgeois class, the actual unfolding of the revolutionary process takes place subterraneously, in the darkness of the factory and in the obscurity of the consciousness of the countless multitudes that capitalism subjects to its laws. It is not controllable and documentable: it will be so in the future when the elements that constitute it (the feelings, the desires, the mores, the germs of initiative and of habit) are developed and purified by the evolution of society and the new place that the working class comes to occupy in the field of production. The revolutionary organizations of the political party and the trade union are born on the terrain of political liberty and bourgeois democracy, as an affirmation and development of liberty and of democracy in general, where the relationships of citizen to citizen subsist. The revolutionary process takes place on the terrain of production, in the factory, where the relations are those of oppressor to oppressed, of exploiter to exploited, where freedom for the worker does not exist, where democracy does not exist. The revolutionary process occurs where the worker is nothing and wants to become everything, where the power of the proprietor is unlimited, is the power of life and death over the worker, over the workers' wife and over the workers' children.

When we say that the historical process of the workers' revolution which is immanent in the human community under capitalism, whose intrinsic laws are those of an objective concatenation of a multiplicity of actions that are uncontrollable, because they are created by a situation that has not been willed by the worker and is not foreseeable by the worker—when we say that this historical process has exploded into the light of day, has it become a controllable and documentable force?

We say this when the whole working-class has become revolutionary: no longer in the sense that it refuses in a general way to collaborate with the ruling institutions of the bourgeois class and represents an opposition within the framework of democracy, but in the sense that the working class, as it is to be found in a factory, launches a movement that must necessarily result in the founding of a workers' State—that is, shape a human society altogether different from anything that has previously existed, in a universal form that embraces the whole workers' International, and hence the whole of humanity. We say the present period is revolutionary precisely because we can see that the working class, in all countries, is tending to generate from within itself, with the utmost vital energy (if with the mistakes, gropings and encumbrances natural to an oppressed class which has no historical precedent, and must do everything for the first time), proletarian institutions of a new type: representative in basis and industrial in arena. We say the present period is revolutionary because the working class tends with all its energy and all its will-power to found its own State. That is why we claim that the birth of the workers' Factory Councils represents a major historical event—the beginning of a new era in the history of humanity. The revolutionary process has exploded into the light of day. It has become controllable and documentable.

In the liberal phase of the historical evolution of the bourgeois class and the society dominated by the bourgeoisie, the elementary cell of the State was the proprietor who subjugated the working class to his profit in the factory. The proprietor was also the entrepreneur and the industrialist. Industrial power and its source was in the factory, and the worker never succeeded in freeing himself from the conviction that the proprietor was necessary: his person was identified with that of the industrialist, with that of the manager responsible for production and hence also for the workers' wages, his bread, his clothing, his roof.

In the imperialist phase of the historical evolution of the bourgeois class, industrial power has become separated from the factory and is concentrated in a trust, in a monopoly, in a bank, in the State bureaucracy. Industrial power does not have to answer for what it does and hence becomes more autocratic, ruthless and arbitrary. But the worker, freed from obedience to the 'boss' in a servile atmosphere of hierarchy, and stimulated by new social and historical conditions, achieves price-less gains in independence and initiative.

In the factory the working-class becomes a determinate 'instrument of production' in a determinate organic system. Every worker enters 'at the dictate of chance' to play a part in this system: at the dictate of chance so far as his own will is concerned, but not at the dictate of

chance as regards the assignation of his work, since he represents a specific necessity in the process of labour and production. It is only for this that he is taken on: it is only for this that he is able to earn his bread. He is a cog in the machine of the division of labour, in a working class constituted into an instrument of production. If the worker acquires a clear consciousness of the 'determinate necessity' of his situation and makes it the basis of a representative apparatus of a State-type (that is, not voluntary or contractual, through the membership card, but absolute and organic, part of a reality that is a precondition of bread, clothes, housing, industrial production)—if the working class does this, it achieves something of deep significance. It initiates a new history, the era of workers' States that must coalesce to form a communist society: a world organized on the model of a large engineering works, an International in which every people, every part of humanity acquires a characteristic personality by its performance of a particular form of production and not by its organization as a State with particular frontiers.

In so far as it builds this representative apparatus, the working class effectively completes the expropriation of the primary machine, of the most important instrument of production: the working class itself. It thereby rediscovers itself, acquiring consciousness of its organic unity and counterposing itself as a whole to capitalism. The working class thus asserts that industrial power and its source ought to return to the factory. It presents the factory in a new light, from the workers' point of view, as a form in which the working class constitutes itself into a specific organic body, as the cell of a new State, the workers' State—and as the basis of a new representative system, a system of Councils. The workers' State, which is born within a specific matrix of production, creates the conditions for its own development and for its ultimate disappearance as a State, with its organic incorporation into the world system of the Communist International.

In the Council of a large engineering works today, every work team (by craft) is united, from the proletarian point of view, with the other teams in the section, and every branch of industrial production merges with all the other branches, throwing into relief the productive process: so throughout the world, English *coal* will mix with Russian *petrol*, Siberian *grain* with Sicilian *sulphur*, *rice* from Vercelli with *wood* from Styria . . . in a single organism, subject to an international administration which governs the richness of the world in the name of all humanity. In this sense the workers' Factory Council is the first cell of a historical process which should end in the Communist International, no longer as a political organization of the revolutionary proletariat, but as a reorganization of the world economy and of the whole human community, on a national and international scale. Every revolutionary action has value and is historically real, in so far as it participates in this process and is conceived as an initiative to free it from the bourgeois superstructures that restrict and obstruct it.

The relations that should link the political party and the Factory Council, the trade union and the Factory Council, are already implicit in the argument that has been presented. The party and the trade union

should not impose themselves as tutors or ready-made superstructures for the new institution, in which the historical process of the revolution takes a controllable historical form. They should become the conscious agents of its liberation from the restrictive forces concentrated in the bourgeois State. They ought to set themselves the task of organizing the general external (political) conditions in which the process of the revolution can achieve its maximum speed, and liberated productive forces find their greatest expansion.

5 Jan 1920

3 Unions and Councils - I

The proletarian organization that, as a total expression of the worker and peasant masses, is centred on the Confederation of Labour is undergoing a constitutional crisis similar in nature to the crisis in which the democratic parliamentary State is vainly struggling. This crisis is a crisis of power and sovereignty. The solution of the one is the solution of the other. By solving the problem of the will for power in the sphere of their class organization, the workers will succeed in creating the organic foundations of their State and will victoriously counterpose it to the parliamentary State.

The workers feel that the complex of 'their' organization, the trade union, has become such an enormous apparatus that it now obeys laws internal to its structure and its complicated functions, but foreign to the masses who have acquired a consciousness of their historical mission as a revolutionary class. They feel that their will for power is not adequately expressed, in a clear and precise sense, in the present institutional hierarchy. They feel that even in their own home, in the house they have built tenaciously, with patient effort, cementing it with their blood and tears, the machine crushes man and bureaucracy sterilizes the creative spirit. Banal and verbalistic dilettantism cannot hide the absence of precise ideas for the necessities of industrial production, or a lack of understanding for the psychology of the proletarian masses. These *de facto* conditions irritate the workers, but as individuals they are powerless to change them: the worlds and desires of each single man are too small in comparison to the iron laws inherent in the bureaucratic structure of the trade-union apparatus.

The leaders of the organization are oblivious to this deep and wide-spread crisis. The clearer it becomes that the working class is organized in forms that do not accord with its real historical structure; the more certain it is that the working class is not organized into an institution that perpetually adapts itself to the laws that govern the intimate process of the real historical development of the class itself: the more these leaders persist in blindness, and work to resolve dissensions and conflicts within the organization 'legalistically'. Eminently bureaucratic in spirit, they believe that an objective condition, rooted in the psychology that develops in the living experience of the workshop, can be overcome by speeches that move the emotions and with an agenda voted unanimously in an assembly stupefied by oratorical din and verbosity. Today, they are stirring themselves to 'keep up with the

times' and, to show that they are still capable of 'trenchant thought', they are reviving the old and threadbare syndicalist ideology, insisting painfully on establishing an identity between the Soviet and the trade union, insisting painfully on the claim that the present system of union organization already constitutes the foundation for a Communist society, the system of forces which should embody the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In the form in which it exists at present in Western Europe, the trade union is a kind of organization which not only differs essentially from the Soviet, but also differs considerably from the trade union as it is steadily developing in the Russian Communist Republic.

The craft unions, the Chambers of Labour,³ the industrial federations and the General Confederation of Labour are the types of proletarian organization specific to the historical period dominated by capital. It can be maintained that they are in a certain sense an integral part of capitalist society, and have a function which is inherent in the régime of private property. In this period, when individuals are only valued as owners of commodities, which they trade as property, the workers too are forced to obey the iron laws of general necessity; they become traders in their sole property—their labour power and professional skills. More exposed to the risks of competition, the workers have accumulated their property in ever broader and more comprehensive 'firms', they have created these enormous apparatuses for the concentration of work energy, they have imposed prices and hours and have disciplined the market. They have hired from outside or produced from inside a trusted administrative staff, expert in this kind of speculation, able to dominate market conditions, to lay down contracts, to evaluate commercial risks and to initiate profitable economic operations. The union's essential nature is competitive, not Communist. The union cannot be the instrument for a radical renovation of society, it can provide the proletariat with proficient bureaucrats, technical experts on industrial questions of a general kind, but it cannot be the basis for proletarian power. It offers no possibility of fostering the individual abilities of proletarians which make them capable and worthy of running society; it cannot produce the leadership which will embody the vital forces and rhythm of the progress of Communist society.

The proletarian dictatorship can only be embodied in a type of organization that is specific to the activity of producers, not wage-earners, the slaves of capital. The Factory Council is the nuclear cell of this organization. For all branches of labour are represented in the Council, in proportion to the contribution each craft and each branch of labour makes to the manufacture of the object the factory produces

³ '*Camere del Lavoro*': The first chambers of labour were set up in Milan in 1889 on the model of the French '*bourses de travail*'. Like the British trades council, they provided a central organization for all the working class institutions in a commune or province, developed a wide range of welfare activities and planned and directed the local class struggle. Whereas the later-founded trade unions were based on the aristocracy of skilled workers, and tended towards conservatism, the Chamber of Labour united all workers, and represented the radical wing of the working-class forces.

for the collectivity; it is a class institution and a social institution. Its *raison d'être* is in labour, in industrial production, i.e. in a permanent fact, and no longer in wages, in class divisions, i.e. in a transitory fact—precisely the one that we wish to supersede.

Hence the Council realizes the unity of the working class, gives the masses a cohesion and form of the same nature as the cohesion and form the masses assume in the general organization of society.

The Factory Council is the model for the proletarian State. All the problems inherent in the organization of the proletarian State are inherent in the organization of the Council. In the one and in the other the concept of the citizen gives way to the concept of the comrade: collaboration to produce well and usefully increases solidarity and multiplies ties of affection and fraternity. Everyone is indispensable, everyone is in his place, everyone has his function and his position. Even the most ignorant and backward of workers, even the most vain and 'civil' of engineers will eventually convince himself of this truth in the experience of factory organization; all eventually acquire a Communist consciousness, so that they can understand the great step forward that the Communist economy represents as against the capitalist economy. The Council is the best adapted organ for the mutual education which develops the new social spirit that the proletariat has successfully expressed out of the rich and living experience of the community of labour. In the trade union, workers' solidarity was fostered by the struggle against capitalism, in suffering and sacrifice. In the Council, it is positive and permanent, it is embodied in even the least moments of industrial production. It is a joyous consciousness of being an organic whole, a homogeneous and compact system that by useful work and the disinterested production of social wealth, affirms its sovereignty, realizes its power and freedom to create history.

The existence of an organization in which the proletariat is structured homogeneously as a productive class, making possible a free, spontaneous flowering of respected and capable leaders and individuals, will have fundamental effects on the constitution and spirit that informs the activity of the trade unions.

The Factory Council, too, is based on the crafts. In every department, the workers are differentiated into teams and each team is a labour unit (a craft unit); the Council is made up precisely of commissars whom the workers elect by departmental crafts (teams). But the union is based on the individual, while the Council is based on the organic and concrete unity of the craft as it is realized in the discipline of the industrial process. The team (craft) feels its distinctness from the homogeneous body of the class, but at the same time, it also feels its enmeshment in the system of discipline and order that makes possible the development of production and its exact and definite functioning. As an economic and political interest the craft is an indistinct and perfectly solidary part of the class body; it is distinct from it as a technical interest and as a development of the particular tool it utilizes in the work-process. In the same way, all industries are homogeneous and solidary in their aim

to perfect the production, distribution and social accumulation of wealth, but each industry has distinct interests where the technical organization of its specific activity is concerned.

The existence of the Councils gives the workers direct responsibility for production, leads them to improve their work, institutes a conscious and voluntary discipline, and creates the psychology of the producer, the creator of history. The workers will carry this new consciousness into the union, and the latter, instead of pursuing the simple activity of the class struggle, will devote itself to the fundamental work of imprinting a new configuration on economic life and labour technique; it will devote itself to the elaboration of the forms of economic life and professional technique proper to Communist civilization. In this sense, the trade unions, made up of the best and most conscious workers, will realize the highest moment of the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat: they will create the objective conditions in which classes will no longer be able to exist or re-emerge.

The industrial unions in Russia are doing this. They have become the organs in which all the individual undertakings of a certain industry are amalgamated, interconnected and articulated, forming one great industrial unit. Wasteful competition is being eliminated, the main services of administration, supply, distribution and storage are being unified in great centres. Work systems, manufacturing secrets and new applications are immediately made available to the whole of the industry. The multiplication of bureaucratic and disciplinary functions inherent in relations of private property and individual enterprise is being reduced to minimal industrial necessities. The application of union principles to the Russian textile industry has made possible a reduction in the bureaucracy from 100,000 employees to 3,500.

Factory organization will bind the class (the whole class) into a homogeneous and cohesive unit that can adapt flexibly to the industrial process of production and dominate it, bringing it under final control. So factory organization will embody the proletarian dictatorship, the Communist State that destroys class dominion in the political superstructures and in their general interconnections.

Craft and industrial unions will be the rigid backbone of the great proletarian body. They will elaborate individual and local experience and store it up, realizing that national equalization of the conditions of labour and production on which Communist equality is concretely based.

But if it is to be possible to impress on the unions this positive class and Communist direction, it is essential that the workers turn their whole will and credence to the consolidation and diffusion of the Councils, to the organic unification of the working class. On this homogeneous and solid basis all the higher structures of the Communist dictatorship and economy will flourish and develop.

11 October 1919.

4 Unions and Councils—II

The trade union is not a predetermined phenomenon: it *becomes* a determinate institution, that is, it *assumes* a definite historical form to the extent that the strength and will of the workers who are its members impress a policy and propose an aim that define it.

Objectively, the trade union is the form that labour as a commodity necessarily assumes in a capitalist régime when it organizes to dominate the market. This form is an office of functionaries, technicians (when they are technicians) of organization, specialists (when they are specialists) in the art of centralizing and leading the workers' forces in order to establish an advantageous balance between the working class and the power of capital.

The development of trade-union organization is characterized by two facts: 1. the union embraces an ever larger number of workers; 2. the union concentrates and generalizes its scope so that the power and discipline of the movement are focused in a central office. This office detaches itself from the masses it regiments, removing itself from the fickle eddy of moods and currents that are typical of the great tumultuous masses. The union thus acquires the ability to sign agreements and take on responsibilities, obliging the entrepreneur to accept a certain legality in his relations with the workers. This legality is conditional on the trust the entrepreneur has in the *solvency* of the union and in its ability to ensure that the working masses respect their contractual obligations.

The emergence of an industrial legality is a great victory for the working class, but it is not the ultimate and definitive victory. Industrial legality has improved the working class's material living conditions, but it is no more than a compromise—a compromise which had to be made and which must be supported until the balance of forces favours the working class. If the officials of the trade union organization regard industrial legality as a necessary, but not permanently necessary compromise; if they devote all the means at the disposal of the union to improving the balance of forces for the working class; and if they make all the indispensable moral and material preparations for the working class at a given moment to be able to launch a successful offensive against capital and subject it to its law, then the trade union is a revolutionary instrument and union discipline, even when it is used to make the workers respect industrial legality, is revolutionary discipline.

The relations which should prevail between union and Factory Council must be considered from this viewpoint: from our judgment of the nature and value of industrial legality.

The Factory Council is the negation of industrial legality. It tends at every moment to destroy it, for it necessarily leads the working class towards the conquest of industrial power, and indeed makes the working class the source of industrial power. The union represents legality, and must aim to make it respected by its members. The trade union is responsible to the industrialists, but it is responsible to them in so far as

it is responsible to its own members: it guarantees continuity of labour and income to the workers and their families, that is, bread and a roof over their heads. By its revolutionary spontaneity, the Factory Council tends to unleash the class war at any moment; by its bureaucratic form, the trade union tends to prevent the class war ever being unleashed. The relations between the two institutions should be such that a capricious impulse on the part of the Councils could not cause a step backward by the working class, a working class defeat; in other words, the Council should accept and assimilate the discipline of the union, while the revolutionary character of the Council exercises influence on the union, as a reagent dissolving its bureaucratism.

The Council tends to move beyond industrial legality at any moment. The Council is the exploited, tyrannized mass, forced to perform servile labour; hence it tends to universalize every rebellion, to give a revolutionary scope and value to each of its acts of power. The union, as an organization totally committed to legality, tends to universalize and perpetuate this legality. The relations between trade union and Council should create the conditions in which the movement away from legality—the proletarian offensive—occurs at the most opportune moment for the working class, when it has that minimum of preparation that is indispensable to a durable victory.

The liaison between unions and Councils can only be established by one link: the majority or a substantial part of the electors to the Councils should be organized in the union. Every bid to link the two institutions in a relation of hierarchical dependence can only lead to the destruction of both.

If the conception that makes the Council a mere instrument in the trade union struggle is materialized in a bureaucratic discipline and rights of direct union control over the Council, the Council is sterilized as a force of revolutionary expansion—as a form of real development of the proletarian revolution that tends spontaneously to create new modes of production and labour, new modes of discipline, a Communist society. The emergence of the Councils is a result of the position the working class has won on the terrain of industrial production; the Council is a historical necessity of the working class. Thus any bid to subordinate it hierarchically to the trade union will sooner or later result in a clash between the two institutions. The power of the Councils consists in the fact that they are close to and coincide with the consciousness of the working masses who are seeking their autonomous emancipation, who wish to affirm their freedom of initiative in the creation of history: the whole mass participates in the life of the Council and feels itself to be something through this activity. Only very small numbers of members participate in the life of the union; its real strength lies in this fact, but this fact is also a weakness that cannot be put to the test without grave risks.

If, moreover, the union were to lean directly on the Councils, not to dominate but to become a higher form of them, the typical tendency of the Councils to move beyond industrial legality at any moment and

unleash decisive actions in the class war would be reflected in the union. The latter would forfeit its ability to make commitments and would lose its character as a disciplinary and regulative force over the working class.

If its members establish a revolutionary discipline in the union, which appears to the masses as a necessity for the victory of the workers' revolution and not as slavery to capital, this discipline will undoubtedly be accepted and made its own by the Councils. It will become the natural form of the Councils' action. If the union office becomes an organ of revolutionary preparation, and appears as such to the masses in the practice it executes, in the men who compose it and the propaganda it develops, then its centralized and absolute character will be seen by the masses as a major revolutionary strength, as one more (and a very important) condition for the success of the struggle to which they are basically committed.

In Italian conditions, the union bureaucrat conceives industrial legality as a permanent state of affairs. He too often defends it from the same viewpoint as the proprietor. He sees only chaos and wilfulness in everything that emerges from the working masses. He does not understand the worker's act of rebellion against capitalist discipline as a rebellion; he perceives only the physical act, which may in itself and for itself be trivial. Thus the story about the 'porter's raincoat' has been as widely disseminated and interpreted by stupid journalists as the fable of the 'socialization of women in Russia'. In these conditions union discipline can only be a service to capital; in these conditions every bid to subordinate the Councils to the unions can only be judged as reactionary.

Communists want the act of revolution to be as far as possible conscious and responsible. They therefore want the choice of the moment to unleash the workers' offensive (to the extent that there is a choice) to remain in the hands of the most conscious and responsible section of the working class: that which is organized in the Socialist Party and participates most actively in the life of the organization. Therefore, the Communists cannot wish that the union lose any of its disciplinary control and its systematic centralization.

By constituting themselves into permanently organized groups in the unions and the factories, the Communists must introduce the conceptions, theses and tactics of the Third International; they must influence union discipline and determine its aims; they must influence the deliberations of the Factory Councils and transform the rebellious impulses produced by the situation capitalism has imposed on the working class into consciousness and revolutionary creativity. The Communists in the Party have the greatest interest in this, for on their shoulders rests the heaviest historical responsibility: to promote by incessant activity relations of natural interpenetration and interdependence between the various institutions of the working class that will enliven its discipline and organization with a revolutionary spirit.

5 The Party and the Revolution

The Socialist Party, with its network of sections which in their turn are the fulcrum of a compact and powerful system of ward circles in the great industrial centres; with its provincial federations, tightly unified by the currents of ideas and activities that radiate from the urban centres; with its annual congresses for the discussion and resolutions of immediate, concrete problems, which embody the highest sovereignty of the Party, exercised by the mass of the members through precise delegations, with limited powers; with its leadership, which emanates directly from the congress and constitutes its permanent executive and organ of control—the Socialist Party constitutes an apparatus of proletarian democracy which might easily in political fantasy be regarded as ‘exemplary’.

The Socialist Party is a model of a ‘libertarian’ society, voluntarily disciplined by an explicit act of consciousness. To imagine the whole of human society as a colossal Society Party, with its requests for admission and its resignations, cannot but encourage the contractualist prejudices of the many subversive spirits who are influenced by J. J. Rousseau and anarchist pamphlets rather than by the historical and economic doctrines of Marxism. The Constitution of the Russian Soviet Republic is based on exactly the same principles as the Socialist Party; the government of Russian popular sovereignty functions in forms suggestively similar to the forms of government in the Socialist Party. Hence it is not surprising that these elements of analogy and instinctive aspirations should give rise to the revolutionary myth which conceives the installation of proletarian power as a dictatorship of the system of Socialist Party sections.

This conception is at least as utopian as that which acknowledges the unions and the Chambers of Labour as the proper forms of the revolutionary process. Communist society can only be conceived as a ‘natural’ formation built on the means of production and exchange; and the revolution can only be conceived as the act of historical acknowledgment of the ‘naturalness’ of this formation. Hence the revolutionary process can only be identified with a spontaneous movement of the working masses caused by the clash of the contradictions inherent in common human life under a régime of capitalist property. Caught in the pincers of capitalist conflicts, and threatened by condemnation without appeal to the loss of civil and spiritual rights, the masses break with the forms of bourgeois democracy and leave behind the legality of the bourgeois constitution. Society could well collapse, all production of useful social wealth might slump, precipitating men into a bottomless abyss of poverty, barbarism and death, if there is no reaction by the historically conscious masses of the people to find a new framework, to build a new order in the process of the production and distribution of wealth. The proletariat’s organs of struggle are the ‘agents’ of this colossal mass movement; the Socialist Party is indubitably the most important ‘agent’ in this process of destruction and neo-formation, but it is not and cannot be conceived as the form of this process, a form malleable and plastic to the leaders’ will. German Social-Democracy

(understood as an ensemble of political and trade union institutions paradoxically forced the process of the German proletarian revolution violently into its own organizational forms, thinking it could dominate history. It has created *its own* Councils by fiat, with a secure majority of its own men on them; it has hobbled the revolution and domesticated it. Today it has lost all contact with historical reality, except for the contact of Noske's fist on the workers' backs, and the revolutionary process follows its own uncontrolled and as yet mysterious course which will burst forth again in unknown founts of violence and agony.

The Socialist Party achieves the same results with its intransigence in the political domain as the trade unions do in the economic field: it puts an end to free competition. With its revolutionary programme, the Socialist Party pulls out from under the bourgeois State apparatus its democratic basis in the consensus of the governed. It influences even wider popular masses and assures them that the state of distress in which they are caught is not a passing phase, nor an unavoidable evil but corresponds to an objective necessity: it is the ineluctable moment of a dialectical process which must overflow in violent turbulence to regenerate society. Thus the Party is identified with the historical consciousness of the popular masses and governs their irresistible spontaneous movement. It is an incorporeal government, which functions through a myriad spiritual links; it is a radiation of prestige, only becoming an effective government in culminating movements: by an appeal to the streets, by a physical array of militant forces, poised to ward off a danger or dissolve a cloud of reactionary violence.

Once the Party has successfully paralysed the functioning of the legal government over the popular masses, the most difficult and delicate phase of its activity opens before it: the phase of positive activity. The conceptions the Party disseminates operate autonomously in the individual consciousness, and they cause new social configurations to emerge in line with these conceptions. They produce institutions that function by internal laws, an embryonic apparatus of power in which the masses realize their government, and acquire a consciousness of their historical responsibility and peculiar mission: the creation of the conditions for a regenerative communism. As a compact and militant ideological formation, the Party influences this intimate elaboration of new structures, this industry of millions and millions of social infusorians preparing the red reefs of coral whose growth will break the strength of the oceanic tempest in the not so distant future, and bring back peace to the waves, establishing a new balance of currents and climes. But this influx is organic, it grows from the circulation of ideas, the maintenance intact of the apparatus of spiritual government, from the fact that the myriads of workers who establish the new leaderships and institute the new order know that the historical consciousness that moves them has its living embodiment in the Socialist Party: it is justified by the doctrine of the Socialist Party, and has a powerful bulwark in the political strength of the Socialist Party.

The Party remains the superior hierarchy of this irresistible mass move-

ment. It exercises the most effective of dictatorships, a dictatorship born of its prestige, of the conscious and spontaneous acceptance of an authority that is acknowledged as indispensable to the success of the work undertaken. It would be disastrous if a sectarian conception of the Party role in the revolution claimed to materialize this hierarchy, and fix in mechanical forms of immediate power an apparatus governing the masses in movement, forcing the revolutionary process into the forms of the Party. The result would be to divert a number of men and to 'dominate' history, but the real revolutionary process would escape the control and influence of the Party which would unconsciously become an organ of conservatism.

The propaganda of the Socialist Party insists on these irrefutable theses. The traditional relations of capitalist appropriation of the product of human labour have changed radically. Before the War, Italian labour agreed without serious or explosive resistance to the appropriation of 60 per cent of labour-produced wealth at the hands of the tiny capitalist minority and the State, while the tens of millions of the working population had to be content with a scarce 40 per cent for the satisfaction of elementary needs and higher cultural life. Today, after the War, a new situation has emerged. Italian society only produces one half of the wealth it consumes; the State is colossally in debt to future labour, that is, it is progressively enslaving Italian labour to the international plutocracy. To the two groups who take a slice out of production (the capitalists and the State) it has added a third, purely parasitic one: the petty-bourgeoisie of the military-bureaucratic caste which formed during the War. It seizes precisely that half of the wealth which is unproduced and becomes a debt to future labour: it seizes it directly as stipends and pensions, and indirectly because its parasitic function presupposes the existence of a whole parasitic apparatus. If Italian society only produces fifteen billion *lire* of wealth while it consumes thirty, and these fifteen are produced by a daily eight hours labour on the part of the tens of millions of the working population who receive six to seven billions as their wages, a capitalist balance-sheet can only be re-established normally in one way: by forcing the tens of millions of the working population to give for the same mass of wages, one, two, three, four or five hours more labour daily. This is unpaid labour, labour which goes to increase capital, so it can return to its accumulatory function; which goes to the State so that it can pay its debts; or which consolidates the economic situation of the salaried petty-bourgeoisie and rewards it for its armed services to the State and Capital in forcing the working population to exhaust itself at machines and on patches of earth.

In this general situation of capitalist relations, the class struggle cannot be aimed at any goal other than the conquest of State power by the working class so they can turn this ruthless power against the parasites and force them to return to the ranks of labour, and abolish at one stroke the monstrous slice they grab today. To this end the whole labouring masses must co-operate, they must become a conscious formation according to the place they occupy in the process of production and exchange. Thus every worker and every peasant is summoned

by the Councils to collaborate in the effort of regeneration, and to constitute the apparatus of industrial government and dictatorship: the present form of the class struggle for power is embodied in the Councils. This, then, is the network of institutions in which the revolutionary process is developing: the Council, the trade union, the Socialist Party. The Council is an historical product of Italian society, defined by the necessity to dominate the productive apparatus, born of the conquest of self-consciousness by the producers. The union and the Party are voluntary associations, stimulants of the revolutionary process, 'agents' and 'administrators' of the revolution; the union co-ordinates the productive forces and imprints on the industrial apparatus a communistic form; the Socialist Party, the living and dynamic model of a social life in common that unites discipline with freedom, gives the human spirit all the energy and enthusiasm of which it is capable.

27 December 1919

6 Two Revolutions

Any form of political power can only be historically conceived and justified as the juridical apparatus of a real economic power. It can only be conceived and justified as the defensive organization and developmental condition of a determinate order in the relations of production and distribution of wealth. This basic (and elementary) canon of historical materialism sums up the whole complex of theses we have been trying to develop organically with respect to the problem of the Factory Councils. It sums up the reasons why, in dealing with the real problems of the proletarian class, we have given a central and pre-eminent place to the positive experience determined by the profound movement of the working masses in the creation, development and co-ordination of the Councils. We have therefore maintained: 1. that the revolution is not necessarily proletarian and Communist if it proposes and obtains the overthrow of the political government of the bourgeois State; 2. nor is it proletarian and Communist if it proposes and obtains the destruction of the representative institutions and administrative machine through which the central government exercises the political power of the bourgeoisie; 3. it is not proletarian and Communist even if the wave of popular insurrection places power in the hands of men who call themselves (and sincerely are) Communists. The revolution is proletarian and Communist only in so far as it liberates the proletarian and Communist forces of production, forces that have been developing within the society ruled by the capital class. It is proletarian and Communist in so far as it advances and promotes the growth and systematization of proletarian and Communist forces that can begin the patient, methodical work necessary for the construction of a new order in the relations of production and distribution: a new order in which a class-divided society will become an impossibility, and whose systematic development will therefore tend to coincide with the withering away of State power, with a systematic dissolution of the political organization that defends the proletarian class, while the latter itself will dissolve to become mankind.

The revolution that is achieved by the destruction of the bourgeois

State apparatus, and the construction of a new State apparatus, concerns and involves all the classes oppressed by capitalism. Immediately, it is determined by the brute fact that, in the conditions of famine left by the imperialist War, the great majority of the population (made up of artisans, small landowners, petit-bourgeois intellectuals, extremely poor peasant masses and backward proletarian masses) are no longer guaranteed even the elementary needs of daily life. This revolution tends to have a predominately anarchistic and destructive character and to manifest itself as a blind explosion of anger, a tremendous release of fury, without any concrete object, which only results in a new State power if fatigue, disillusionment and hunger finally impose the necessity for a new constitutional order and a power to enforce respect for that order.

This revolution may result merely in a constituent assembly that tries to heal the wounds inflicted on the bourgeois State apparatus by popular anger. It may go as far as Soviets, the autonomous political organization of the proletariat and the other oppressed classes, but which in this case do not dare go beyond their organization to change economic relations, so that they are cast aside by the reaction of the propertied classes. It may go as far as the complete destruction of the bourgeois State machine, and the establishment of a situation of permanent disorder, in which the existing wealth and population dissolve and disappear, shattered by the impossibility of any autonomous organization. It may go as far as the establishment of a proletarian and Communist power which is exhausted by repeated desperate attempts to create in an authoritarian manner the economic conditions necessary for its survival and growth, and is finally overturned by capitalist reaction.

In Germany, Austria, Bavaria, the Ukraine and Hungary, we have seen these historical developments unfold; the revolution as a destructive act has not been followed by the revolution as a process of reconstruction towards Communism. The existence of external conditions—a Communist Party, the destruction of the bourgeois State, highly organized trade unions and an armed proletariat—is not enough to compensate for the absence of another condition: the existence of productive forces tending towards development and growth, a conscious movement of the proletarian masses in favour of substantiating its political power by economic power, the will on the part of the proletarian masses to introduce proletarian order into the factory, to make the factory the nucleus of the new State, and to build the new State as an expression of the industrial relations of the factory system.

That is why we have always maintained that the duty of the existing Communist nuclei in the Party was to avoid particularistic obsessions (the problem of electoral abstentionism, the problem of the constitution of a 'true' Communist Party) and instead work for the creation of the mass conditions in which it would be possible to resolve all particular problems as problems in the organic development of the Communist Revolution. In fact, can a Communist Party really exist (one which is an active party, not an academy of doctrinaires and petty

politicians who think and express themselves 'well' where Communism is concerned) if the masses do not have the spirit of historical initiative and the aspiration towards industrial autonomy that should be reflected and synthesized in the Communist Party? Since the formation of a party and the emergence of the real historical forces of which parties are the reflections do not occur all at once out of nothing, but according to a dialectical process, is not the major task of the Communist forces precisely that of giving consciousness and organization to the essentially Communist productive forces that must be developed, and which by their growth will create the secure and lasting economic base of the political power of the proletariat?

Similarly, can the Party abstain from participation in electoral struggles for the representative institutions of bourgeois democracy, if one of its tasks is the political organization of all the oppressed classes about the Communist proletariat, and to obtain this it must become the governmental party for these classes in a democratic sense, given that it can only be the party of the Communist proletariat in a revolutionary sense?

In so far as it becomes the party of 'democratic' trust for all the oppressed classes, in so far as it keeps in permanent contact with every group of working people, the Communist Party leads all sections of the people to acknowledge the Communist proletariat as the ruling class that must replace the capitalist class in State power. It creates the conditions in which it is possible to identify the revolution that destroys the bourgeois State with the proletarian revolution, with the revolution that expropriates the expropriators and inaugurates the development of a new order in the relations of production and distribution.

Hence, in so far as it claims to be the specific party of the industrial proletariat, and works to provide a precise consciousness and a policy for the productive forces produced by the development of capitalism, the Communist Party creates the economic preconditions for the State power of the Communist proletariat. It creates the conditions in which the proletarian revolution can be identified with the popular revolt against the bourgeois State, the conditions in which this revolt becomes an act liberating the real productive forces that have accumulated within capitalist society.

These various series of historical events are not detached and independent; they are moments in a single dialectical process of development during which relations of cause and effect interlace, reverse, and interweave with one another. But the experience of revolutions has shown that, since Russia, all other two-stage revolutions have failed and the failure of the second revolution has prostrated the working classes in a state of demoralization which enabled the bourgeois classes to reorganise in strength and begin the systematic annihilation of every bid by the Communist vanguard to reconstitute itself.

For those Communists who are not content to chew monotonously the cud of the basic principles of Communism and historical materialism, and are alive to the reality of the struggle, grasping reality as it is,

from the viewpoint of historical materialism and Communism, the revolution as the conquest of social power for the proletariat can only be conceived as a dialectical process in which political power makes possible industrial power and industrial power political power. The Soviet is the instrument of revolutionary political struggle which permits the autonomous development of that Communist economic organization whose Central Economic Council is established on the basis of Factory Councils, and settles the plans of production and distribution, thereby suppressing capitalist competition. The Factory Council, as a form of producers' autonomy in the industrial field and as the basis of Communist economic organization, is the instrument of a mortal struggle against the capitalist régime in so far as it creates the conditions in which class-divided society is suppressed and any new class division is rendered 'materially' impossible.

But for Communists alive to the struggle, this conception will not remain an abstract thought; it will become an incitement to struggle, a stimulus to greater efforts of organization and propaganda.

Industrial development has produced a certain degree of mental independence and a certain spirit of positive historical initiative in the masses. These elements of the proletarian revolution must be given form and organization; the psychological conditions for their development and generalization throughout the labouring masses must be created by the struggle for the control of production.

We must promote the organic constitution of a Communist Party which is not a collection of doctrinaires or little Machiavellis, but a party of Communist revolutionary action, a party with a precise consciousness of the historical mission of the proletariat and the ability to guide the proletariat in the realization of that mission—hence, a party of the masses who want to free themselves from political and industrial slavery autonomously, by their own efforts, through the organization of the social economy, and not a party which uses the masses for its own heroic attempts to imitate the French Jacobins. To the extent that it can be achieved by party action, it is necessary to create the conditions in which there will not be two revolutions, but in which the popular revolt against the bourgeois State will be able to find the organizational forces capable of beginning the transformation of the national apparatus of production from an instrument of plutocratic oppression to an instrument of Communist liberation.

3 July 1920

7 The Question of Force

There are two powers in Italy, the power of the bourgeois State and the power of the working class: the second is progressively destroying the first. Only one function of the bourgeois State is alive today: its self-defence, the preparation of arms and armed men for its defence. It stands with its rifle permanently at the shoulder, ready to fire just as soon as the enemy takes on a concrete form and is embodied in the institution that will begin to exercise its new power. The power of the

working class grows more and more massive every day; it is present in the strikes, the agitation, the fears of the governing class, the convulsions of the government officials, the trepidation of the capitalists and the continuous rabid snarling of all the watchdogs guarding the strong-room. The power of the working class could be embodied in a Council system tomorrow, or even today, if all that was necessary was the revolutionary enthusiasm of the proletariat and a majority of the population on the proletarian side.

Today, the struggle between these two powers is on the brink of armed and organized violence. The bourgeois State only survives because it possesses a centre of co-ordination for its military might and because it still has the initiative: it is in a position to manoeuvre its troops and concentrate them on the revolutionary epicentres, drowning them in a torrent of blood.

This problem of force is finding its resolution in the process of revolutionary development. Every day new groups of the working population are welcomed into the general movement of the national and global proletarian revolution. Italian capitalism has its deepest roots and the seat of its hegemony in Northern Italy, in the industrial centres of Northern Italy. The Communist revolution, which in Italy presents itself as a revolution in industrial technique, as a problem of the equalization of the conditions of agricultural labour and the conditions of industrial labour, will have its major seat in the North. The class of factory workers will be confronted with the tremendous problem produced by the War: how can it succeed in building a State organization that has the means to industrialize agriculture and is able to provide the peasants with the same conditions of labour as the workers, so that it will be possible to exchange one hour of agricultural labour with one hour of industrial labour, so that the proletariat is not destroyed by the countryside in the exchange of commodities produced in absolutely non-comparable conditions of labour? This problem, which the capitalist industrialists are unable to solve, and which, if it is not resolved, will smash the bourgeois State, can be resolved by the workers, by a workers' State in Italy—as it has been resolved and is being resolved by the Russian workers' State. It will be resolved by the urban industrial workers who will become the principal agents of the Communist revolution.

If the workers, concentrated in the industrial cities, are to be the principal actors in the Communist revolution, the principal actors in the pre-revolutionary activity will rather be the peasant masses. Movements of the rural masses will definitively destroy the power of the bourgeois State, by destroying its military might. No army is large enough to subdue the countryside in revolt: regiments that seem invincible when they are amassed in the streets of a city, are a joke in the immensity of open fields: the cannons, machine-guns and flame-throwers that would scythe down a crowd of workers in closed streets and squares, are impotent in the immensity of the rural horizon.

The bourgeois State feels this danger is imminent: the countryside is going over to the revolution. From Apulia to Novara, from Novara to

Brescia and Bergamo, the peasant masses are emerging from their torpor and engaging in grandiose actions. The Popular Party⁴ is deeply shaken by these gigantic clashes. Under the impulse of the poor peasants who militate under its banners, the Left Wing of the Popular Party is adopting extremist and revolutionary attitudes. The bourgeois State detects this danger and would like to accelerate events in the industrial cities and solidly Communist centres. For these will become the fulcrum of the revolution; they will provide its soul and aims, and will construct the new society from the ruins of the old. Hence it is enough for an internal commission to move the hands of a factory clock to set hundreds of royal guards⁵ and *carabinieri* in motion, to threaten an Armageddon. The working class must be on its guard, it must maintain discipline in its revolutionary trenches, a discipline whose substance is patience, proletarian critical sense, and trust in its own forces and future. The revolutionary situation is developing implacably, smashing the bourgeois State and destroying capitalist power. The working class will win; the proletariat, as it wills the revolution, must concern itself with a durable victory, a *permanent* victory. It is the depository of the future, the living energy of history; it must not expose itself to a repression that would put it out of action for too long a period. The bourgeois State would be glad to take its mercenary troops away from the cities and send them against the peasants if it could smash the workers and secure its rear. The working class is the most politically educated section of the whole working people; it must face the problem of force and realize that it can be largely resolved by the action of the peasant masses. The Russian working class was able to wait from July to November in 1917; in these months, the Russian peasants isolated Kerensky's State; then the workers launched their assault and resolutely seized power.

The normal development of the revolution will largely resolve the problem of armed force and the victory of the working class over bourgeois State power. But part of this problem must be solved by the general political action of the proletariat and its political party, the Socialist Party. The bourgeois State is changing the national army into a mercenary army. Following a minutely prepared plan, soldiers have been transferred from their regiments to the legions of *carabinieri*, while retaining their special skills. *Carabinieri* corps of artillerymen, mortar-men, machine-gunners, flame-throwers, and others have been formed. Parliament is not concerned by this activity of the government, which exceeds its powers and its constitutional limits. Parliament should ask the government to explain this activity, to force it at least to unmask its intentions, to show in the clear light of day how the bourgeois dictatorship works. It ignores basic charters and devotes the whole administrative apparatus and all its financial resources to a single end: its defence

⁴ *Il Partito Popolare*: The Popular Party was founded in 1919 by a Sicilian priest, Don Luigi Sturzo, and in the same year it obtained 100 seats in the Chamber of Deputies out of a total of 508 (the PSI got 156). A non-confessional Catholic and rural petit-bourgeois party, it had a large peasant following. It was a fore-runner of the modern Christian-Democrat Party (DC).

⁵ *Guardia Regia*: a force of 377 officers and 25,000 men founded by Prime Minister Nitti (in office June 1919 to June 1920) in the Autumn of 1919 in a reorganization and reinforcement of police and security forces.

against the majority of the population whose supreme representative and sovereignty it claims to be.

26 March 1920

8 Toward a Renewal of the Socialist Party

1. In Italy at the present time, the class struggle is defined by the fact that industrial and agricultural workers throughout the national territory are irrevocably determined to pose the question of the ownership of the means of production in explicit and violent terms. The intensification of the national and international crises which are steadily annihilating the value of money demonstrates that capital is *in extremis*. The present order of production and distribution can no longer satisfy even the elementary demands of human life, and it only survives because it is fiercely defended by the armed might of the bourgeois State. Every movement of the Italian working people tends irresistibly towards the realization of a gigantic economic revolution that will introduce new modes of production, a new order in the productive and distributive process, and give the initiative in production to the class of industrial and agricultural workers, by seizing it from the hands of the capitalists and landowners.

2. The industrialists and landowners have achieved a maximum concentration of class discipline and power: a line promulgated by the General Confederation of Italian Industry⁶ is immediately carried out in every factory in the land. The bourgeois State has created a body of armed mercenaries⁷, organized to function as an executive instrument carrying out the wishes of this new and powerful organization of the propertied classes; it tends to restore capitalist power over the means of production by a widespread application of the lock-out and terrorism, forcing the workers and peasants to let themselves be expropriated of an increased quantity of unpaid labour. The recent lock-out in the Turin engineering factories⁸ was an episode in this plan of the industrialists to bring the working class to heel: they profited by the lack of revolutionary co-ordination and concentration in the Italian workers' forces with a bid to smash the solidarity of the Turin proletariat and drive into oblivion the prestige and authority of the factory institutions (Councils and shop commissions) that had initiated the struggle for workers' control. The length of the agricultural strikes in the Novara area and Lomellina show that the landowners are prepared to destroy production so as to reduce the agricultural proletariat to despair and starvation, implacably subjecting it to the hardest and most humiliating conditions of labour and existence.

3. The present phase of the class struggle in Italy is the phase that pre-

⁶ The General Confederation of Italian Industry (*Confindustria*): Militant organization of Italian capitalists; originally founded in 1910, on the basis of a Turin industrialists' league. Re-established in 1920 under the leadership of Gino Olivetti.

⁷ The Royal Guard; see note 6 above.

⁸ When daylight saving was introduced in the Fiat works in Turin without consulting the internal commission, a worker was dismissed for turning back the clock. Protest by the workers resulted in a lock-out on March 28th 1920. This incident, the so-called 'clock-bands strike', led to the Turin general strike of April, 1920.

cedes: either the conquest of political power by the revolutionary proletariat and the transition to new modes of production and distribution that will make possible a rise in productivity—or a tremendous reaction by the propertied classes and the governmental caste. No violence will be spared in this subjection of the industrial and agricultural proletariat to servile labour: a bid will be made to smash inexorably the working class's institutions of political struggle (the Socialist Party) and to incorporate its institutions of economic resistance (unions and co-operatives) into the machinery of the bourgeois State.

4. The workers' and peasants' forces lack revolutionary co-ordination and concentration because the leading institutions of the Socialist Party have shown no understanding at all of the phase of development that national and international history is at present traversing, nor of the mission resting on revolutionary proletarian institutions of struggle. The Socialist Party is a spectator of the course of events. It never has an opinion based on the revolutionary theses of Marxism and of the Communist International; it does not launch slogans which can be adopted by the masses; it does not lay down a general line, or unify and concentrate revolutionary action. As a political organization of the vanguard of the working class, the Socialist Party should develop an overall action to raise the working class to the level from which it can win the revolution, and win it lastingly. Since it is composed of that part of the working class that has not let itself be demoralized and prostrated by the physical and spiritual oppression of the capitalist system, but has succeeded in maintaining its own autonomy and a spirit of conscious and disciplined initiative, the Socialist Party should embody the vigilant revolutionary consciousness of the whole of the exploited class. Its task is to focus in itself the attention of all the masses so that its directives become the directives of all the masses, so that it can win their permanent trust and become their guide and intellect. Hence it is essential that the Party live permanently immersed in the reality of the class struggle fought by the industrial and agricultural proletariat, that it be able to understand its various phases and episodes, its manifold manifestations, drawing unity from this manifold diversity. It should be in a position to give a real leadership to the movement as a whole and impress on the masses the conviction that there is an order immanent in the present terrible disorder, an order that will systematically regenerate human society and make the means of labour suit elementary vital needs and civil progress. But even since the Bologna Congress⁹, the Socialist Party is still a merely parliamentary party, immobilized within the narrow limits of bourgeois democracy and preoccupied solely by the superficial political declarations of the governmental caste. It does not possess the features of party autonomy which should characterize the revolutionary proletariat, and the revolutionary proletariat alone.

5. After the Bologna Congress, the central institutions of the Party

⁹ The Bologna Congress of the PSI was held from October 5th to October 8th 1919. The Congress adopted Serrati's maximalist motion, including adhesion to the Third International, and rejected a reformist motion and an extreme left abstentionist motion.

should immediately have initiated and carried through an energetic drive to homogenize and unify the revolutionary membership of the Party, in order to give it the specific and distinct features of a Communist Party belonging to the Third International. But the polemic with the reformists and opportunists has not even been started; neither the Party leadership, nor *Avanti!*¹⁰ has counterposed a truly revolutionary conception to the ceaseless propaganda the reformists and opportunists have been disseminating in Parliament and in the trade union organizations. Nothing has been done by the central organs of the Party to give the masses a Communist political education, to induce the masses to eliminate the reformists and opportunists from the leadership of the unions and co-operatives, or to give individual sections and the most active groups of comrades a unified line and tactics. The result is that while the revolutionary majority of the Party has not found any expression of its thought or executor of its intentions in the leadership or the press, the opportunist elements, on the contrary, have been strongly organized and have exploited the prestige and authority of the Party to consolidate their positions in Parliament and the unions. The leadership has allowed them to centralize and to vote for resolutions that contradict the principles and tactics of the Third International, and are hostile to the Party line. The leadership has granted absolute autonomy to subordinate institutions, allowing them to pursue actions and disseminate ideas that are opposed to the principles and tactics of the Third International. The Party leadership has been systematically absent from the life and activity of the sections, of the institutions and of individual members. The confusion that existed in the Party before the Bologna Congress and could be explained by a wartime regime has not disappeared; it has even increased terrifyingly. It is natural that in such conditions the confidence of the masses in the Party should have declined and that in many places anarchist tendencies have tried to gain the upper hand. The political party of the working class only justifies itself when by a strong centralization and co-ordination of proletarian action, it counterposes a real revolutionary power to the legal power of the bourgeois State and limits its freedom of initiative and manoeuvre. If the Party cannot unify and co-ordinate its efforts, if it reveals itself as a merely bureaucratic institution, with no spirit or will, the working class tends instinctively to build itself another party, and it moves over towards those anarchistic tendencies that bitterly and ceaselessly criticize the centralization and bureaucracy of political parties.

6. The Party has been absent from the international movement. Throughout the world the class struggle is increasing in scale. Everywhere workers are forced to renew their methods of struggle, and often, as in Germany after the military coup,¹¹ to rise up with arms in their hands. The Party has not bothered to explain these events to the Italian working people, or to justify them in the light of the ideas of the Communist International. It has not taken the trouble to carry out the vast educational activity needed to make the Italian working people con-

¹⁰ *Avanti!*: The official daily newspaper of the PSI, founded in 1896.

¹¹ The Kapp putsch of March 1920 was defeated by a general strike in Berlin. The Weimar government had to use *Fritikorps* divisions to suppress armed workers in Berlin and the Ruhr who hoped to extend the movement into a proletarian insurrection.

scious of the fact that the proletarian revolution is a world phenomenon and that each single individual event must be considered and judged in a world context. The Third International has already met twice in Western Europe: in December 1919, in a German city; in February 1920, in Amsterdam. The Italian Party was represented at neither of those two meetings. The Party's militants were not even informed by the central organs of the discussions and deliberations that took place at them. There is a ferment of polemic in the Third International about the doctrine and tactics of the Communist International; this has even led to internal splits (for example, in Germany¹²). The Italian Party has remained completely cut off from this vigorous debate of ideas which is steeling revolutionary consciousness and building the spiritual unity of action of the proletariat in every country. The central organ of the Party does not have its own correspondents in France, England, Germany or even in Switzerland; a strange state of affairs for the paper of the Socialist Party that represents the interests of the international proletariat in Italy, and a strange state of affairs for the Italian working class, which has to obtain its information from the warped and tendentious reports provided by bourgeois papers and news agencies. As the Party organ, *Avanti!* should be the organ of the Third International. There should be a place in *Avanti!* for all the reports, polemics and discussions of proletarian problems that are relevant to the Third International. *Avanti!* should contain a ceaseless polemic, in a spirit of unity, against all opportunist deviations and compromises; instead, *Avanti!* stresses manifestations of opportunist thought, such as the recent speech in parliament by Claudio Treves in which was interwoven a petit-bourgeois conception of international relations and a defeatist counter-revolutionary theory designed to demobilize proletarian energies¹³. This absence from the central organs of any preoccupation with keeping the proletariat informed of the events and theoretical discussions that are unfolding within the Third International can also be observed in the activities of the publishing house. It is still publishing unimportant pamphlets or writings spreading the ideas and opinions of the Second International, while it neglects the publications of the Third International. Writings by Russian comrades that are indispensable to an understanding of the Bolshevik Revolution have been translated in Switzerland, in England and in Germany, but they are unknown in Italy: Lenin's *State and Revolution* is just one example of many. When works are published, they are execrably translated, and errors of grammar and of simple common sense often make them incomprehensible.

7. The above analysis has already revealed the indispensable renovation and organization we feel must be carried out by the Party's membership. The Party must acquire its own precise and distinct features:

¹² The 'Bremen Radicals', one of the left-wing Socialist groups that united in January 1919 to form the German Communist Party (KPD), split away later the same year and formed the German Workers' Communist Party (KAPD) on an abstentionist and overriderist platform.

¹³ Claudio Treves was one of the leaders of the reformist wing of the PSI. The speech in question, known as the 'expiation speech' was made on March 30th, 1920. Treves argued that while the bourgeoisie could no longer maintain its power in Italy, the proletariat was unable to seize power from it. Hence the tragedy and 'expiation' of the ruling classes.

from a petit-bourgeois parliamentary party it must become the party of the revolutionary proletariat in its struggle for the advent of communist society by way of the workers' State: a homogeneous, cohesive party with its own doctrine, tactics and rigid and implacable discipline. Non-Communist revolutionaries must be eliminated from the Party, and its leadership, freed from preoccupation with the preservation of unity and balance among the various tendencies and leaders, should turn all its energies to the organization of the workers' forces on a war footing. Every event in national and international proletarian life should be analysed immediately in manifestos and circulars by the leadership, using them to promote the arguments of Communist propaganda and the education of revolutionary consciousness. The leadership should keep constantly in touch with the sections, and become the motor centre of proletarian action in all its manifestations. The sections should promote the constitution of Communist groups in all factories, unions, co-operatives and barracks, ceaselessly diffusing through the masses the ideas and tactics of the Party, and organizing the creation of Factory Councils for the exercise of control over industrial and agricultural production. It should pursue the necessary propaganda for an organic conquest of the unions, the Chambers of Labour and the General Confederation of Labour, and should form the trusted elements that the mass will delegate for the formation of political Soviets and for the exercise of the proletarian dictatorship. The existence of a cohesive and highly disciplined Communist Party with factory, trade union and co-operative cells, that can co-ordinate and centralize in its central executive committee the whole revolutionary action of the proletariat, is the fundamental and indispensable condition for any experiment in Soviets. In the absence of such a condition every proposed experiment should be rejected as absurd and useful only to the opponents of the idea of Soviets. Similarly, we should reject the proposal of a little socialist parliament,¹⁴ for it would rapidly degenerate into a tool of the reformist and opportunist majority in the parliamentary group for the dissemination of democratic utopias and counter-revolutionary projects.

8. The leadership should immediately prepare, compose and distribute a programme of revolutionary government by the Socialist Party, examining the concrete solutions that the proletariat, when it is the ruling class, will give to all the essential problems—economic, political, religious, and educational—that assail the various strata of the Italian working population. Basing itself on the idea that the Party's power and activity is founded solely on the class of industrial and agricultural workers, who are totally without private property, and that it regards the other strata of working people as auxiliaries of the strictly proletarian class, the Party must issue a manifesto in which the revolutionary conquest of political power is explicitly proposed, in which the industrial and agricultural proletariat is invited to prepare itself and arm itself, and in which the principles of Communist solutions to

¹⁴ This was a proposal to bring together in an assembly the socialist Deputies and spokesmen from the major political, trade union and co-operative organizations of the Party, to work out proposals for an alternative government policy, and to put pressure on the existing government. The reformists would have been in a majority in such an assembly.

present problems are indicated: proletarian control of production and distribution, disarmament of mercenary armed bodies, control of local government by workers' organizations.

9. On the basis of these considerations, the Turin Socialist Section proposes backing an agreement with those groups of comrades from all sections who would like to meet together to discuss these proposals and approve them; an organized agreement that will prepare for a congress in the near future, devoted to discussion of the problems of proletarian organization and tactics, and which will examine the activity of the executive organs of the Party in the meantime.

8 May 1920

9 Political Capacity

Today, the engineering workers are to approve or reject, by referendum, the motion voted by the congress of their Federation¹⁵. The result of this consultation of factory guilds is not difficult to predict. The referendum is an exquisitely democratic and counter-revolutionary form; it serves to valorize the amorphous mass of the population and to crush the vanguards that lead those masses and give them a political consciousness.

So the vanguard of the proletariat should not be demoralized or disorganized by this outcome of the revolutionary movement. Its quality as a vanguard will be verified by the strength of mind and political capacity it succeeds in demonstrating. Have the groups of workers which have been at the head of the movement in the last few days taken the exact measure of their powers to act and the forces of passive resistance that exist within the masses? Have they acquired a consciousness of their historical mission? Have they acquired a consciousness of the inner weaknesses which members of the working class have revealed, weaknesses which are not individual, that do not lower our assessment of the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat in the present historical phase, but which can be traced to the general relations of a trade organization? Have they transformed their experiences into an active and operative consciousness? Are they skilled in identifying the deepest hidden feelings that move the popular mind, and the negative feelings, the inhibiting impulses that fatigue, and immobilize the most generous and daring impulses?

The political capacity of the proletarian vanguard (and hence the real revolutionary capacity of the Italian working class) will depend on the attitudes that emerge from today's referendum. Many perils threaten the working class; these perils are not external, they are primarily internal. The greatest danger is the lack of a 'spirit of adaptation' to higher circumstances, a spirit of critical, conscious and deliberate adaptation, which cannot and must not be confused with opportunism. Rather, it is their lack of this spirit of adaptation that leads the working

¹⁵ The decision by the engineering workers' union (FIOM) to end the month-long factory occupation throughout Italy was submitted to the workers' approval by referendum on September 24th 1920. A small majority approved the agreement.

class into opportunism, or, what comes to the same thing, to the triumph of the opportunists among the masses, to the maintenance of the leadership that has brought the revolutionary movement to its present pass. The revolutionary vanguard needs to consider and analyse the events that have just taken place, not according to its own wishes, passions and will, but objectively, as external data to be subjected to political judgment, and as a historical movement susceptible to conscious extension and development. From a merely objective point of view, the working class can register a great step forward. As a mass guided and disciplined in the factory by its direct representatives, it has proved itself capable of industrial and political self-government. This fact, which should be elementary for revolutionary Communists, has consequences of incalculable social importance. The middle classes of the population have compared the strength of the proletariat with the inadequacy of the entrepreneurial class. Half a century ago, the proletariat was still, as Marx put it, a *sack of potatoes*, a generic imponderable, an amorphous conglomeration of individuals without ideas, without will, and without a unitary perspective. Today it is the entrepreneurial class that has become a *sack of potatoes*, an aggregate of the inept and the imbecile, without political capacity, without internal power. The revolutionary events of the past few days have illuminated this position of the two classes competing for the government of society's production. The prejudices and follies that the capitalist-owned press had disseminated in public opinion have collapsed; the middle classes are lining up with the proletariat, convinced that this young and energetic class holds the key to civilization and human progress. From the test that both classes have had to undergo, the proletariat has emerged higher in public estimation, while capitalism has revealed even further its deficiencies and incapacity. This new political situation has definitely put forward the proletariat as a ruling class; it is a spring that drives it irresistibly towards the conquest of power.

Why, then, did this not happen immediately? Or at least, why has no attempt been made to reach this goal? The answer to this question must be sought in the tactics pursued until today, culminating in the referendum. The leadership of the proletarian movement bases itself on the 'masses', that is, it asks the masses for prior permission to act, consulting them in the forms and at the time it chooses. But a revolutionary movement can only be based on the proletarian vanguard, and must be led without prior consultation, without the apparatus of representative assemblies. Revolution is like war; it must be minutely prepared by a working-class general staff, just as a war is by the Army's general staff. Assemblies can only ratify what has already taken place, exalt the successful and implacably punish the unsuccessful. It is the task of the proletarian vanguard to keep the revolutionary spirit constantly awake in the masses, to create the conditions which keep them ready for action, in which the proletariat will respond immediately to the call for revolution. In the same way, the nationalists and imperialists, with their frantic preaching of patriotic vanities and hatred against foreigners, are trying to create the conditions in which the crowd will approve a war that has already been agreed on by the general staff of the Army and the diplomatic service. No war would ever break out if prior permission had to be obtained from the masses to declare it; parliaments approve

wars because they know they have already been inexorably decided, because they know that they will be thrust inexorably aside if they oppose them. Similarly, no revolutionary movement can be decreed by a workers' national assembly. To call for such an assembly is to confess one's disbelief in it beforehand; it amounts to exercising a prejudicial pressure against it.

The proletarian vanguard, which today is disilluisioned and threatened with dissolution, must ask itself whether it is not itself responsible for this situation. It is a fact that in the General Confederation of Labour, there is no organized revolutionary opposition, centralized enough to exercise control over the leading offices and capable not only of replacing one man by another, but one method by another, one aim by another and one will by another. This is the real situation, which lamentations, reproaches and oaths will not change, only tenacious and patient organization and preparation. It is thus essential that the groups of workers which have been at the head of the masses accept the facts as they are, in order to alter them effectively. The masses must be kept firm and united behind their programmes and slogans; it must be made possible for an energetic general staff to emerge from among them which is able to conduct wide-scale collective action with intelligence and daring. Today, we have the referendum; its result must not be the occasion for dismay and dissolution, but rather a call for tighter, more disciplined and better organized action. The emancipation of the proletariat is not a labour of small account and of little men; only he who can keep his heart strong and his will as sharp as a sword when the general disilluisionment is at its worst can be regarded as a fighter for the working class, or called a revolutionary.

24 September 1920

Art after October

After the Bolshevik Revolution the old schools and academics of art were dissolved and their property requisitioned. Soon afterwards, on the initiative of the Department of Fine Arts set up by the People's Commissariat of Education, under Anatoly Lunacharsky, they were reopened with an entirely new constitution. Previously the Union of Artists had insisted that only artists should have control over artistic matters, without any governmental intervention, and Lunacharsky agreed to accept this demand. Hence the unprecedented decrees which we publish here: decrees which inaugurated not only an entirely new vision of how education should be organized but also an extraordinary upsurge of revolutionary art. Almost all the leading 'leftist' artists were involved in the Department of Fine Arts and the art schools—in Petrograd, Moscow and Vitebsk—set up by the decrees. Tatlin was chairman of the Moscow section of the Department for a time; Altman of the Petrograd section. Kandinsky, Chagall, Tatlin, Malevich, Lissitsky, among others, taught in the schools. Their work and the work of their students represents the high point of European art in this century. Naum Gabo has described the conditions at the school in Moscow: 'What is important to know about the character of the institution is that it was almost autonomous; it was both a school and a free academy where not only the current teaching of special professions was carried out (there were seven departments: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Ceramics, Metalwork and Woodwork, Textiles and Typography) but general discussions were held and seminars conducted among the students on diverse problems where the public could participate and artists not officially on the faculty could speak and give lessons. It had an audience of several thousand students, although a shifting one due to the Civil War and the war with Poland. There was a free exchange between workshops and also the private studios such as mine During these seminars as well as during the general meetings, many ideological questions between opposing artists in our abstract group were thrashed out. These gatherings had a much greater influence on the later development of constructive art than all the teaching.' This heroic experiment lasted for three years till the beginning of the New Economic Policy and the right turn which accompanied this. The 'leftist' currents in art continued their struggle, often with success, for about another decade before they were finally defeated.

Decree of the Council of People's Commissars

The Academy of Fine Art, as a state institution, is to be abolished. The Higher Institute of Fine Art is to be detached, with its own credits and its own capital, from the Academy of Fine Art, and reorganized as a Free School of Art.

The museum of the Academy of Fine Art will come under the jurisdiction of the People's Commissariat for Education.

All the capital and all the assets of the Academy of Fine Art become the property of the Soviet Republic, as a fund to be used to satisfy the special needs of artistic culture.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

V. Ulyanov (Lenin)

People's Commissars

A. Lunacharsky

Stalin

G. Chicherin

Responsible Officer of the Council of People's Commissars

C. V. Bonch-Bruевич

Regulations for the Acceptance of Students in the Free Studios of the State.

1. Whoever wishes to receive a specialized art education has the right to register as a student at the Free Artists' Studios of the State.
2. Applications will be accepted from people of sixteen years and over.
Note: Those who wish to enrol at the Free Artists' Studios of the State do not have to present any type of diploma.
3. All students who were registered at the ex-School of Art are thereby considered students of the Free Artists' Studios of the State.
4. Applications from those who wish to work in the Free Artists' Studios of the State will be accepted at any time throughout the year.

People's Commissar for Education

A. Lunacharsky

Director of the Section of Fine Arts

D. Shterenberg

Secretary

A. Trunin

Instructions for the election of supervisors in the Free Studios of the State. (Extracts)

1. Students in the Free Artists' Studios have all, without exception, the right to elect their teachers for their respective subjects.
2. All arts have the right to representation in the Studios.

3. All artists have the right to put forward their candidature as supervisors in the Studios.
 4. Students in the Free Artists' Studios will divide into groups according to the artistic currents with which they have the greatest affinity, and also to the specific character of the various studios.
 10. The groups thus organized, wherever they have more than twenty members, may choose their own supervisor independently of other groups.
 14. Students also have the right to work without a supervisor.
 15. Elected supervisors stay in office for two years and will be registered at the People's Commissariat for Education.
- Note:* Supervisors whose courses are not attended for three months will be expected to resign at the end of the academic year.

Decree of the People's Commissar for Education on the assignation of studios to painters.

To secure for painters the necessary conditions for their work, it is declared that professional painters have the right to one room for use as a studio, and one room for living purposes.

Neither room may be requisitioned for any reason, and co-tenants will not be allowed.

People's Commissar for Education
A. Lunacharsky

Appeal sent by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the students of the Section of Fine Arts to young Western Artists.

Comrades, for almost seven years we have been all but isolated. What little news we have received either on the situation in art-schools or on the development of western art drives us to seek out, with ever greater energy, the best ways of establishing contacts between young artists.

But we are also driven by the desire to share with you the joy which we feel together with the whole of the Communist Russia which is coming into being.

In the three years of revolution we have devoted many efforts first to destroying the old schools and then to creating the new. We carried out this activity in extremely difficult conditions; on the one hand, because of the economic crisis created as a result of the blockade, and, on the other hand, because we were forced to fight on two fronts, repulsing the imperialists of the Entente with guns in our hands at the same time as struggling inside the country against the 'spiritual counter-revolution', which did everything it could to suffocate us in old and mouldy academy-schools and other 'holy' institutions, under the cover of worn-out slogans like: apoliticism, cultural heritage etc. But now our combined efforts are bringing us near to total victory.

The old world, the academic world, the world of priests is beginning to quake.

Our struggle on the spiritual front inside Russia is not yet finished. For the reasons above we have not been able to organize many schools, but some are already quite good; not only the communists recognize this, but also the best theorists of the old artistic culture. . . .

All the youth of our Republic, like the young communists, have shown themselves solid and inflexible against those bastions of the old world—the academics—just as the communists are inflexible against every bastion of capitalism.

The news which we have received, although sparse and fragmentary, tells of a crisis in Western art, of its separation and isolation, and you can well believe that we, who have always tried to learn from the West, are very concerned about this. . . .

We find that the only way to eliminate the separation of art from life is that of returning to the first foundation of life, to economics, which is the principle basis of everything. However hard one tries to awaken interests with gimmicks, without resolving this fundamental question, art will increasingly be impoverished and isolated, despite all the inventions and conquests of the past ten years. We would even say that these conquests will increasingly lose value, because the principal question is not being faced. You will understand therefore the joy which we feel seeing the first swallows that come flying from the West, even if the artists who see the problem in the same way as we do are few and isolated.

Academies and institutes created by the bourgeoisie will attempt to distract you in every possible way from this first cause, and only when you turn your attention to social relations, when you see the proletariat on the march and you put yourself on its side in the struggle for economic emancipation, when in your aspirations communism burns like a torch, when you make a clean sweep of all academies and institutes, then your art will not be a burden, but a spiritual necessity.

For the Communist Revolution!
For the new culture of the Revolution!
For the vanguard of culture, artistic youth!
In the name of 10 thousand students.

1919

Introduction to Jacques Lacan

'What distinguishes the analyst is that he makes of a function that is common to all men a privileged use: when he becomes *the bearer* of the word. For this is indeed what the analyst does for the communication of the subject . . .': Jacques Lacan.¹

It would be all too easy to say of Lacan that 'the style is the man' if, anticipating the suggestion, he had not himself questioned its application. He reminds us, in his '*Overture*' to *Écrits*,² that 'man is no longer so secure a reference'; and as to the style, it is both everyman and no man, inasmuch as 'it is not man that speaks, but in and through man it (*pe*) speaks, and man's nature becomes interwoven with effects which exhibit the structure of language, of which he becomes the substance.'³ As if to demonstrate this, Lacan's style, by its patient, methodical use of every form of rhetoric, by its ceaseless 'working-through', and all the elaborate machinery of its progress to formal perfection, might well seem to mark a dissolution of 'style'.⁴

¹ 'Variantes de la cure-type', *Écrits*, p. 350.

² *Écrits*, Editions du Seuil, Paris 1967.

³ 'La signification du Phallus', *Écrits*, p. 688.

⁴ Paradoxically, Lacan's style is often attacked as obscure, meretricious, idiosyncratic, and quite inappropriate in a 'man of science'. The misunderstanding might well be instructive. It is not a new one. Heraclitus, so often echoed in Lacan, taught like him that 'the Logos is common, but the many live as though they had a private understanding': yet he was himself known as the Riddler and the Obscure.

For mastery of style is but submission to it; as in the lapidary, the language of inscriptions, one of the oldest of the forms of style: The Unconscious is the discourse of the Other/ The Unconscious has the structure of language/ The desire of man is the desire of the Other/ In the Unconscious it (*fa*) speaks/ Man is nothing but the place of return of a discourse/ The style is the man—the man to whom the discourse is addressed. (We may note here that the Other which appears in this sprinkling of Lacanian formulae is the name that Freud himself gave to the Unconscious: the Other scene, irreducibly other, unless we are to assume 'the existence not only of a second consciousness in us, but of a third and fourth also, perhaps of an infinite series of states of consciousness, each and all unknown to us and to one another'.⁵)

Lacan came to Freud, as he tells us, 'oddly yet necessarily'; nor did he come unprepared. His early work⁶, a case-study of paranoia, in which he 'demonstrated that the persecutors were identical with the images of the *ideal-ego*'⁷, had led him to formulate certain original theoretical conceptions of the formation of the *ego* and of what he called, in a phrase intended to shock, the 'paranoiac foundations' of human knowledge. These early acquisitions were to remain constants of his theoretical framework, and he returned to them again and again, indefatigably reworking and consolidating them. The discovery of what is now well known among his co-workers and beyond as the Mirror-phase belongs to this cluster of his earliest theorizing; it was first formulated in 1936 in a paper read to the International Congress of Psychoanalysis held in Marienbad, and in 1949 he again made it the subject of an address to the Zurich Congress. A full translation of this latter address is given here. Owing to its rather condensed presentation, it is sometimes obscure; the main hope of this introduction is to highlight and clarify some of its essential points.

1. The Ego and the Real

In *The Unconscious* (1915) Freud remarked that 'we must learn to emancipate ourselves from our sense of the importance of that symptom which consists in "being conscious"'. Yet, he was, in *The Ego and the Id*, to assign to the *ego* as the perception-consciousness system a privileged synthesizing position. More explicitly, as Lacan points out, 'the development of Freud's view on the *ego* led him to two apparently contradictory formulations.'⁸ For, on the one hand, in the topographical theory, the *ego* takes sides with the object, and resists the *id*, i.e. the combination of drives governed solely by the reality-principle; on the other, in the theory of narcissism, the *ego* takes sides against the object: the concept of libidinal economy. What relation does the 'libidinal subject' have to

⁵ Freud: *The Unconscious*, 1915.

⁶ *La psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité*, Le François, 1932. The very title of this, his doctoral thesis, suggests the structural approach which Lacan was to promote in the fields of psychiatry and psychoanalysis.

⁷ 'Some reflections on the Ego', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, XXXIV (1953), pp. 11–17. A very useful, if rather too condensed, account of some of Lacan's theories to that date; something of a curiosity, too, since it is the only paper by Lacan to be found in the pages of the Journal.

⁸ Ibid.

the *ego*? Lacan takes a first step towards the resolution of the contradiction by showing that the libidinal subject and the *ego* have this at least in common that they are both equally remote from 'reality' naively understood as a *perception* held up to consciousness. At the libidinal level, psychoanalytic experience shows that 'we can specify concretely the oral, anal, and genital relationships which the subject establishes with the outer world'⁹; or, as a pupil of Lacan expresses it, 'when we speak of oral, anal, phallic, we are defining the labels which the *ego* assumes in order to situate itself.'¹⁰ At the level of 'knowledge' of reality, there is a similar formalism. What Lacan calls 'paranoiac human knowledge' has the character of a 'formal stagnation': 'it constitutes the *ego* and objects under attributes of permanence, identity and substantiality, in short, as entities or 'things' which are quite different from those *Gestalten* which we can in experience isolate within the shifting fields of force of animal desire.'¹¹

Thus, in man, libidinal relationships no less than knowledge, 'in its most general formula', are seen to operate at a significant remove from 'natural reality'; the 'objectification' which they presuppose and exemplify is incompatible with the phenomenology of lived experience, e.g. of perception, in which it is not solid and stable 'objects' that are given, but a series of blurred, overlapping profiles, such as can be apprehended in cubist paintings' attempts to represent them. The 'thing'¹² is not the 'real'. But how shall we account for this break with the 'real' and the character of 'autonomy' which human knowledge consequently assumes?

2. The Imaginary

Lacan's explanation makes use of the concept of 'objectivating identification', and of the *Imago* as formative of identification. Psychoanalysis alone has succeeded in giving an adequate account of the concrete reality underlying those mental phenomena called images because it alone has been in a position to discover their formative function in the subject. It shows that 'if current images determine certain individual directions of the drives, it is because they are variations on those specific Images—answering, in our view, to the old name of *Imago*—which constitute the matrices for the "instincts" themselves.'¹³ We shall see that for Lacan the *ego* itself is constituted both as to its energy and as to its form in 'that erotic relationship in which the human individual fastens himself to an image which alienates him from himself'¹⁴, so that 'man's *ego* is for ever irreducible to his lived identity.'

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Aulagnier, quoted in Maud Mannoni. *L'Enfant Arrêté et sa Mère*, Editions du Seuil, Paris.

¹¹ 'L'agressivité en psychanalyse,' *Écrits*, p. 111.

¹² Lacan draws our attention to the etymology of the word '*choses*' (thing): it is derived from the latin *causa*. That of the word 'thing' is no less instructive, from the Anglo-Saxon for 'process/deed/ edict'.

¹³ 'L'agressivité en psychanalyse,' *Écrits*, p. 104.

¹⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 109.

Lacan insists that his starting-point is always in the psychoanalytic experience itself, and it may be appropriate to say a few words here about how he regards that experience, even if this means anticipating on some crucial points. 'The action of psychoanalysis unfolds in and through verbal communication, that is to say in a dialectical apprehension of meaning. It presupposes a subject who manifests himself as subject to and for another'.¹⁵ For reasons that will become clearer later on, Lacan sharply contrasts *ego* and subject: subjectivity has a structure like that of meaning itself: it is intentional and essentially bi-polar. The psychoanalytic situation is the privileged form of intersubjective communication in which, ideally, the analyst receives the full impact of another subject's (the analysand's) bare intentionality as if on the pure and undisturbed surface of a mirror, and with it the projection of his most archaic imaginal fixations (i.e. primordial images which have become unconscious, that is to say, symbolically overdetermined). The analyst must know how to reactivate those images, and this he does precisely by his impersonality—the suspension, so to speak, of his own *ego*. Correlatively, as Lacan insists, he must avoid 'bringing into play those reactions of direct opposition, denial, ostentation and bad faith, which experience shows to be the characteristic expression of the *ego* in the dialogue'.¹⁶ (According to Lacan, it is therefore an aberration to suggest that psychoanalysis should aim at 'strengthening' the patient's *ego*, since the *ego* is regarded by him as responsible for all the resistances to the cure of the symptoms.)

Lacan supports the findings of psychoanalysis (including the work of Melanie Klein) on the formative function of the earliest images with a wealth of data borrowed from the fields of child psychology, gestalt theory, animal ethology, and embryology; of a different order, but of incomparable heuristic value, we have a sustained reference to Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness and the Other in the *Phenomenology of Mind*.

Lacan relates the stages of what, as we saw above, he calls the 'objectivating identification' to the series of reactions studied by child psychologists of the school of Charlotte Bühler under the name of *transitivity*. The very young child's experience of himself in relation to other children, of roughly the same age, is at first one of complete indifferenciation. A child deals a blow to another and reacts as if he had received the blow himself; or he sees another fall, and he cries:

The growth of language in the child will reflect this state of affairs, since the child refers to himself in the third person before he accedes to the use of the first. Charlotte Bühler was led, from her observations of children at play, to conclude that the phenomenon of *transitivity*

¹⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 102.

¹⁶ Freud's article on *Negation* (*Verneinung*) (1925) gives, according to Lacan, the truest account of the 'phenomenological essence' of the 'Instance' of the ego. A philosophical interpretation of that article by Jean Hyppolite, the French translator and commentator of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, is given in an appendix to *Essays*; Lacan comments on Hyppolite's text in 'Introduction au commentaire de Jean Hyppolite sur la *Verneinung* de Freud', *Essays*, p. 381.

is nothing less than a possession ('*captation*') by the image of the other.

But what primarily interests Lacan is the *meaning* for the subject of the facts observed, a meaning which psychoanalysis shows to be operative in the earliest years of the child, and which proves to be of the most momentous consequence.

That the *imago* has formative power is a fact, as Lacan points out, to which animal ethology amply testifies. But while it may be a source of satisfaction to the psychoanalyst to find support for some aspects of his findings in a science 'untainted' by any trace of subjectivity in its object, much more is required to explain why this formative power of the *imago*, this 'psychical causality', has effects in man such that they inaugurate in him the advent of precisely that subjectivity, with its correlate, the *ego*, which set him apart from the rest of the animal world.

It is at this point that Lacan introduces the hypothesis of a *specific prematurity of birth*¹⁷ in man, whose importance to his argument cannot, it would seem, be overestimated. Briefly, the human offspring is born in an unfinished state—as evidenced by the anatomically incomplete pyramidal system and the motor incoordination of the first months—and will for a long time remain almost totally dependent and helpless. We notice at the same time that the infant at a very early stage becomes captivated by the image of the human face and form; this, according to Lacan, marks the first moment of 'the dialectic of identifications'. He sees in it a phenomenon of *Gestalt*: the infant by 'primary identification' with the *imago* of the human form anticipates on the imaginary plane the completeness, the stature, the unity, the lack of which on the organic plane he experiences as helplessness. We cannot see in the child's fascination with the human form anything like a relationship with persons, any more than we can see some mysterious 'empathy' in the phenomenon observed in the reaction of *transitivism* described above. What we have here is something quite fundamental, the nature of which is only fully revealed, even as it reaches the climax of its developmental and formative effects, in the experience of the child gazing at a mirror, which Lacan describes in *The Mirror-phase*. Here, clearly, there is no other person involved, but a pure image only and a pure form. The child 'recognizes' himself in this image, this 'symmetrical and inverted' Other, 'more perfect than himself'.¹⁸ This recognition, which can be inferred from the child's expression and his reactions, itself implies subjectivity. Lacan writes: 'The mirror-phase exhibits that affective dynamism whereby the subject identifies in a primordial way with the visual *Gestalt* of his own body: it is by contrast with his still very deep motor incoordination, an ideal unity, a *salutary*

¹⁷ Lacan refers to the work of embryologists on *fetalization*. The single most important reference must be to Freud himself: 'The biological factor (in the causation of neuroses) is the long period of time during which the young of the human species is in a condition of helplessness and dependence. Its intra-uterine existence seems to be short in comparison with that of most animals, and it is sent into the world in a less finished state. As a result the influence of the objective world upon it is intensified and it is obliged to make an early differentiation between the *ego* and the id'. *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*.

¹⁸ 'O semblable . . . Et pourtant plus parfait que moi-même'. Paul Valéry used this quotation from his *Fragments du Narcisse* as the legend for a photograph of himself.

imago.¹⁹ Despite the unavoidable reference to 'the subject' we should understand that the subject is only constituted for the first time in this *primary identification*, which should therefore be regarded not as an identification in the proper sense but as *what first makes identification possible*. Similarly for the action of the Imago of the human form on the infant's organism: characterized by Lacan as a 'phenomenon of *Gestalt*', it might be compared to what Kant called 'pure *a priori* imagination', as being that 'through which, and in accordance with which, images themselves first become possible.'²⁰ For the child does not recognize an *imago* as such, but is drawn into the programme of a form of himself projected in space, and in that form discovers himself.

Thus, primary identification is not a relation between two terms but the very matrix in which the terms for future relations are generated. It is what first establishes identity, as the subject, in a mirage, discovers for itself a unity. Man's first recognition of himself is a radical *mistracognition*; here, clearly, it can be seen that identity *is* a difference, that the same *is* an other.

3. The symbolic order.

'Self-consciousness has before it another self-consciousness; it has come outside itself. This has a double significance. First it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as an *other* being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for it does not regard the other as essentially real, but sees its own self in the other.'²¹ This quotation from Hegel epitomizes the predicament of the subject, in his intra-subjective no less than in his inter-subjective relations, which result from the transformation of the mirror-phase. For Hegel this murderous-suicidal impasse is resolved through self-realization in work; where previously the slave had found his being-for-self in his master, in fear and trembling, he now creates for himself his own being-for-self in the form that he gives to the products of his labour. For Lacan, too, the only escape from the Other of man's 'imaginary passion', is a submission to a certain kind of labour, to a Law, an Order. It is the symbolic order, the order of Language. 'Man speaks, it is true, but it is because the symbol made him man.'²² Whereas the imaginary function, as we saw, masks the original crack in man's being by endowing him with an illusory, super-real unity, the symbolic function liberates him once and for all from the

¹⁹ 'We might compare this to Freud's views on the transition from auto-erotism—belonging to a stage when the ego is not yet constituted—to narcissism proper: what Lacan calls the phantasy of the 'body-in-fragments' would correspond to the first stage, while the mirror-phase would inaugurate the second, i.e. primary narcissism. But an important difference should be noted: for Lacan, the phantasy of the 'body-in-fragments' arises through the retro-active effect of the mirror-phase. This dialectical relation can be observed in the course of psychoanalytic treatment, when the anxiety of fragmentation is often seen to emerge as a result of loss of narcissistic identification, and inversely.' *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse*, J. Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, (article '*Stade du Miroir*').

²⁰ *Critique of Pure Reason*, (trans. Kemp-Smith, p. 183).

²¹ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, (trans. Baillie, p. 229).

²² 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage,' *Écrits*, p. 276.

obsession of 'the real'. It is the world of words that creates the word of things.²³

Correlatively, 'the law of language is the law of man'. Man's world is a web of symbols and he cannot elude their sovereignty over him. Even his desire, if it is to achieve any degree of satisfaction, must be mediated; it is ultimately the desire to have his desire recognized. '... Desire is an effect in the subject of the condition imposed upon him by the symbol that he should formulate his need, that is to say insert it into the string of the signifier.'²⁴ 'Man's freedom is indistinguishable from his servitude'²⁵: this servitude should be regarded as the long apprenticeship of man's desire to the conditions imposed by the symbol for the realization of human desire.

It is in concrete, intersubjective communication ('evocation') that man discovers his desire and the law of his being—his place in truth, as Lacan calls it. Man is born to and into language but this does not ensure that he can, or that he will, *truly speak*, that is to say unfold himself to an other, and discover in the return of the 'gift' the true nature of his original gift. The imaginary and the symbolic being close correlates, there is always a possibility of a regression in man to the imaginary mode, with its hankering after the super-real, permanent object. When this happens there is a withdrawal from the open exchange of truth in human discourse, and the word becomes the representation of a petrified thing at the service of the hallucinatory satisfaction of a primal desire. Lacan has shown that his 'deviant' mode of functioning of language is possible because the primary processes operating in the unconscious are themselves indistinguishable from fundamental linguistic mechanisms. The primary processes are characterized not by absence of meaning but by mobility of meaning, what Lacan calls, following Saussure, 'the sliding of the signified under the signifier'.²⁶ *Condensation* is re-defined by Lacan as 'the structure of the superimposition of signifiers which is the field of *metaphor*', and *displacement* as that 'veering off of meaning that we see in *metonymy*'.²⁷

Thus it is only because the law of the Unconscious is the law of language that it can imprison man's desire; the unconscious is not the seat of the instincts, but the place where *the letter*²⁸ speaks, a pure signifier cut off from the signifying chain, and thereby producing effects in the subject which are discontinuous with his conscious experience. The unconscious, therefore, 'is that portion of concrete transindividual speech which fails to be at the disposal of the subject for him to re-establish the continuity of his conscious speech.'²⁹ The task of the analyst will be to help the patient re-establish this continuity—by a 'felicitous punc-

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ 'La direction de la cure,' *Écrits*, p. 630.

²⁵ 'Propos sur la causalité psychique,' *Écrits*, p. 182.

²⁶ 'L'instance de la lettre dans l'Inconscient,' *Écrits*, p. 511.

²⁷ Ibid. On the importance of *metaphor* and *metonymy* for modern linguistics, see the work of Roman Jakobson and M. Halle: *The Fundamentals of Language*.

²⁸ *The letter*: 'the material support which concrete speech borrows from language'.

(*L'instance de la lettre dans l'Inconscient*), *Écrits*, p. 495.

²⁹ 'Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage,' *Écrits*, p. 258.

tuation'. The analyst can only do so if when he speaks he utters what the patient has lost and what he is now groping for—the common language of truth.

Editorial Note

Dr Lacan has asked us to point out that psychoanalysis in general, and his own practice in particular, have made great strides since *The Mirror-phase* was written in 1949. Those who would like to see the changes four years can make should consult the *Rome Speech* ('Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse', 1953, *Écrits*, pp. 237–322); Lacan's later position is also revealed by one of the few of his writings that have been translated into English, 'The Inexistence of the Letter' (*Yale French Studies*, Nos. 36 and 37, October 1966, pp. 112–147). The most available source of Lacan's work is the volume of his *Écrits*, published in Paris in 1966 by Editions du Seuil. Less accessible is Lacan's first journal, *La Psychanalyse* (1956–1967). A new journal is now appearing under his direction: *Scilicet* (first issue, 1968). There are few satisfactory secondary works. One of the best, and of especial interest to readers of NLR is Louis Althusser's 'Freud et Lacan', in *La Nouvelle Critique*, Nos. 161–162, December 1964/January 1965. See also Jean Deschamps: 'La Psychanalyse Structuraliste', *La Pensée*, October 1967.

The Mirror-phase as formative of the Function of the I

The conception of the mirror-phase which I introduced at our last congress, 13 years ago, has since become more or less established in the practice of the French group; I think it nevertheless worthwhile to bring it again to your attention, especially today, for the light that it sheds on the formation of the *I* as we experience it in psychoanalysis.¹ It is an experience which leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the *Cogito*.

Some of you may perhaps remember our starting-point in a feature of human behaviour illuminated by a fact of comparative psychology. The human offspring, at an age when he is for a time, however short, outdone by the chimpanzee in instrumental intelligence, can nevertheless already recognize as such

his own image in a mirror. This recognition manifests itself in the illuminatory mimicry of the *Abw-Erlebnis*, which Köhler sees as the expression of situational apperception, an essential moment of the act of intelligence.

This act, far from exhausting itself, as with the chimpanzee, once the image has been mastered and found empty, in the child immediately rebounds in a series of gestures in which he playfully experiences the relations of the assumed movements of the image to the reflected environment, and of this virtual complex to the reality it reduplicates—the child's own body, and the persons or even things in his proximity.

This event can take place, as we have known since Baldwin, from the age of six months, and its repetition has often compelled us to ponder over the startling spectacle of the nursing in front of the mirror. Unable as yet to walk, or even to stand up, and narrowly confined as he is within some support, human or artificial (what, in France, we call a '*trotte-bébé*'), he nevertheless surmounts, in a flutter of jubilant activity, the obstructions of his support in order to fix his attitude in a more or less leaning-forward position, and bring back an instantaneous aspect of the image to hold it in his gaze.

For us, this activity retains the meaning we have given it up to the age of 18 months. This meaning discloses a libidinal dynamism, which has hitherto remained problematic, as well as an ontological structure of the human world which accords with our reflections on paranoid knowledge.

We have only to understand the mirror-phase, as an identification, in the full sense which analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation which takes place in the subject when he assumes an image—whose predestination to this phase-effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytical theory, of the old term *imago*.

This jubilant assumption of his mirror-image by the little man, at the *infans* stage, still sunk in his motor incapacity and nursing dependency, would seem to exhibit in an exemplary situation the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is precipitated in a primordial form, before it is objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as subject.

This form would have to be called the *Ideal-I*², if we wanted to restore it to a familiar scheme, in the sense that it will also be the root-stock for secondary identifications, among which we place the functions of libidinal normalization. But the important point is that this form situates the instance of the *ego*, before its social determination, in a

¹ *Translator's note*—'*I*' is used here and throughout to translate Lacan's '*je*', in '*le je*', '*la fonction du je*', etc. '*Ego*' translates '*le moi*' and is used in the normal sense of psychoanalytic literature. On '*je*', see note 2 below.

² Throughout this article we leave in its peculiarity the translation we have adopted for Freud's *Ideal-Ich* (i.e. '*je-idéal*'), without further comment, save that we have not maintained it since.

fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the development of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as *I* his discordance with his own reality.

The Body as Gestalt

The fact is that the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power is only given to him as a *Gestalt*, that is to say in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted, but in which it appears to him above all in a contrasting size that fixes it and a symmetry that inverts it which are in conflict with the turbulence of the motions which the subject feels animating him. Thus, this *Gestalt*—whose pregnancy should be regarded as linked to the species, though its motor style remains unrecognizable—by these twin aspects of its appearance symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination; it is pregnant with the correspondences which unite the *I* with the statue in which man projects himself, with the phantoms which dominate him, or finally, with the automaton in which, in an ambiguous relation, the world of his fabrication tends to find completion.

Indeed, where *imagos* are concerned—whose veiled faces it is our privilege to see in outline in our daily experience and the penumbra of symbolic efficacy³—the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world, if we go by the mirror disposition which the *imago of our own body* presents in hallucinations or dreams, whether it concerns its individual features, or even its infirmities, or its object-projections; or if we notice the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the *double*, in which psychic realities, however heterogeneous, manifest themselves.

That a *Gestalt* should be capable of formative effects in the organism is attested by a piece of biological experimentation which is itself so alien to the idea of psychic causality that it cannot bring itself to formulate its results in these terms. It nevertheless recognizes that it is a necessary condition for the maturation of the gonad of the female pigeon that it should see another member of its species, of either sex; so sufficient in itself is this condition that the desired effect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of a mirror. Similarly, in the case of the migratory locust, the transition within a generation from the solitary to the gregarious form, can be obtained by the exposure of the individual, at a certain stage, to the exclusively visual action of a similar image, provided it is animated by movements of a style sufficiently close to that characteristic of the species. Such facts are inscribed in an order of homeomorphic identification which would itself fall within the larger question of the meaning of beauty as formative and erotogenic.

But facts of mimicry are no less instructive when conceived as cases of

³ Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Structural Anthropology* Chapter X.

heteromorphic identification, inasmuch as they raise the problem of the significance of space for the living organism; psychological concepts hardly seem less appropriate for shedding light on these matters than ridiculous attempts to reduce them to the supposedly supreme law of adaptation. Let us only recall how Roger Caillois (who was then very young, and still fresh from his breach with the sociological school of his training) illuminated the subject by using the term '*legendary psychasthenia*', to classify morphological mimicry as an obsession with space in its derealizing effect.

We have ourselves shown in the social dialectic which structures human knowledge as paranoid⁴ why human knowledge has greater autonomy than animal knowledge in relation to the field of force of desire, but also why it is determined in the direction of that 'lack of reality' which surrealist dissatisfaction denounces in it. These reflections lead us to recognize in the spatial ensnarement exhibited in the mirror-phase, even before the social dialectic, the effect in man of an organic insufficiency in his natural reality—insofar, that is, as we attach any meaning to the word 'nature'.

We are therefore led to regard the function of the mirror-phase as a particular case of the function of the *image*, which is to establish a relation of the organism to its reality—or, as they say, of the *Innere Welt* to the *Umwelt*.

In man, however, this relation to nature is impaired by a kind of dehiscence of the organism in the womb, a primordial Discord betrayed by the signs of discomfort and motor inco-ordination of the neo-natal months. The objective notion of the anatomical incompleteness of the pyramidal system and likewise the presence of certain humoral residues of the maternal organism confirm the view we have formulated as the fact of a real *specific prematurity of birth* in man.

Let us note, incidentally, that this is a fact fully recognized by embryologists, by the term *foetalization*, which determines the prevalence of the so-called superior apparatus of the neurax, and especially of the cortex, which psycho-surgical operations lead us to regard as the intra-organic mirror.

This development is lived as a temporal dialectic which decisively projects the formation of the individual into history; the *mirror-phase* is a drama whose internal impulse rushes from insufficiency to anticipation and which manufactures for the subject, captive to the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality which we shall call orthopaedic—and to the assumption, finally, of the armour of an alienating identity, which will stamp with the rigidity of its structure the whole of the subject's mental development. Thus, to break out of the circle of the *Innere Welt* into the *Umwelt* generates the endless quadrature of the inventoring of the *ego*.

⁴ See *Essays* pp. 111 and 180.

The Fragmented Body

This fragmented body, the term for which I have introduced into our theoretical frame of reference, regularly manifests itself in dream when the movement of the analysis encounters a certain level of aggressive disintegration in the individual. It then appears in the form of disjointed limbs, or of those organs figured in exoscopy, growing wings and taking up arms for intestinal persecutions—the very same that the visionary Hieronymus Bosch has fixed, for all time, in painting, as they climbed, in the 15th century, to the imaginary zenith of modern man, but this form is even tangibly revealed at the organic level, in the lines of ‘fragilization’ which define the anatomy of phantasy, as exhibited in the schizoid and spasmodic symptoms of hysteria.

Correlatively, the formation of the *I* is symbolized in dreams by a fortress, or a stadium—its inner arena and enclosure, surrounded by marshes and rubbish-tips, dividing it into two opposed fields of contest where the subject flounders in quest of the haughty and remote inner castle, which, in its shape (sometimes juxtaposed in the same scenario), symbolizes the *id* in startling fashion. Similarly, on the mental plane, we find realized the structures of fortified works, the metaphor of which arises spontaneously, and as if issuing from the symptoms themselves, to describe the mechanisms of obsessional neurosis—inversion, isolation, reduplication, cancellation and displacement.

But were we to build on this merely subjective data, and should this be detached from the experiential condition which would make us derive it from a language technique, our theoretical enterprise would remain exposed to the charge of projecting itself into the unthinkable of an absolute subject. That is why we have to find in the present hypothesis, grounded in a conjunction of objective data, the guiding grid for a *method of symbolic reduction*.

It establishes in the *defences of the ego* a genetic order, in accordance with the wish formulated by Miss Anna Freud, in the first part of her great work, and situates (as against a frequently expressed prejudice) hysterical repression and its returns at a more archaic stage than obsessional inversion and its isolating processes, and the latter in turn as preliminary to paranoid alienation, which dates from the deflection of the mirror *I* into the social *I*.

This moment in which the mirror-phase comes to an end inaugurates by the identification with the *image* of the fellow and the drama of primordial jealousy (so well highlighted by the school of Charlotte Bühler in the phenomenon of infantile *transitivism*), the dialectic which will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborated situations.

It is this moment that decisively shakes the whole of human knowledge in the mediatization by the desire of the other, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence by virtue of the competition of the other, and makes the *I* into that system for which every instinctual thrust constitutes a danger, even though it should correspond to a

natural maturation—the very normalization of this maturation being henceforth dependent, in man, on a cultural go-between, as exemplified, in the case of the sexual object, by the Oedipus complex.

In the light of this conception, the term primary narcissism, by which analytical doctrine denotes the libidinal investment characteristic of that moment, reveals in those who invented it the most profound awareness of semantic latencies. But it also illuminates the dynamic opposition of that libido to sexual libido, which they tried to define when they invoked destructive and, indeed, death instincts, in order to explain the evident connection between narcissistic libido and the alienating function of the *I*, the aggressiveness which it releases in any relation to the other, albeit that of the most Samaritan aid.

Existentialism

They were encountering that existential negativity whose reality is so warmly advocated by the contemporary philosophy of being and nothingness.

But unfortunately that philosophy only grasps negativity within the confines of a self-sufficiency of consciousness, which, as one of its premises, links to the constitutive mis-recognitions of the *ego*, the illusion of autonomy to which it entrusts itself. This flight of fancy, for all that it draws, to an unusual extent, on borrowings from psycho-analytic experience, culminates in the pretention to provide an existential psychoanalysis.

At the climax of the historical attempt of a society to refuse to recognize that it has any function other than the utilitarian one, and in the anguish of the individual confronting the concentrational form of the social bond which seems to arise to crown this attempt, existentialism must be judged by the account it gives of the subjective dilemmas which it has indeed given rise to: the freedom which never claims more authenticity than when it is within the walls of a prison; the demand for commitment, expressing the impotence of a pure consciousness to master any situation; the voyeuristic-sadistic idealization of the sexual relationship; the personality which only realizes itself in suicide; the awareness of the other which can only be satisfied by Hegelian murder.

These propositions are denied by all our experience, inasmuch as it teaches us not to regard the *ego* as centred on the *perception-consciousness system*, or as organized by the 'reality principle'—a principle which is the expression of a scientific prejudice most hostile to the dialectic of knowledge. Our experience shows that we should start instead from the *function of mis-recognition* which characterizes the *ego* in all its structures, so markedly articulated by Miss Anna Freud. For, if the *Verdrängung* represents the patent form of that function, its effects will, for the most part, remain latent, so long as they are not illuminated by a light reflected in the plane of fatality, where the *id* is revealed.

We can thus understand the inertia characteristic of the formations of the *I*, and find there the most extensive definition of neurosis—even as

the ensnarement of the subject by the situation which gives us the most general formula for madness, not only the madness which lies behind the walls of asylums, but also the madness which deafens the world with its sound and fury.

The sufferings of neurosis and psychosis are for us the school of the passions of the soul, just as the scourge of the psychoanalytic scales, when we compute the tilt of their threat to entire communities, gives us the index of the deadening of the passions of the city.

At this junction of nature and culture which is so persistently scanned by modern anthropology, psychoanalysis alone recognizes this knot of imaginary servitude which love must always undo again, or sever.

For such a task we place no reliance in altruistic feeling, we who lay bare the aggressiveness that underlies the activity of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and even the reformer.

In the recourse of subject to subject which we preserve, psychoanalysis can accompany the patient to the ecstatic limit of the '*Tu es toi*', wherein is revealed to him the cipher of his mortal destiny, but it is not in our mere power as practitioners to bring him to that point where the real journey begins.

(1949—translated by Jean Russell)

document

Inti Peredo

Guerrilla warfare in Bolivia is not dead: it has just begun.

The Bolivian guerrillas are now fully on their way, and we will unflaggingly carry the struggle through to the brilliant victory of the revolutionary forces that will bring socialism to Latin America.

Our country has lived through—in principle—a revolutionary experience of undreamed-of, continental proportions. The beginning of our struggle was accompanied by tragic adversity. The irreparable physical death of our friend and comrade, our Major Ernesto Che Guevara, as well as of many other fighters, has been a rude blow to us. They, who were the purest and noblest of our continent's generations, did not hesitate to offer up the only thing they could—their lives—on the altar of human redemption.

But these painful events, far from frightening us, strengthen our revolutionary awareness; increase our determination to fight for a just cause; make it stauncher; and forge, in the purifying and bloody crucible of war, new fighters and leaders, who will honour and pay homage to those who have already fallen.

We know what we are fighting for. We are not waging war for the sake of war. We are not wishful thinkers. We are not fighting for the sake of personal or party ambition. We have confidence in man as a human being.

Our single and final goal is the liberation of Latin America, which is more than our continent; it is rather our homeland, temporarily torn into 20 republics.

We are convinced that the dream of Bolívar and Che—that of uniting Latin America both politically and geographically—will be attained through armed struggle, which is the only dignified, honest, glorious, and irreversible method which will motivate the people. No other form of struggle is purer. Guerrilla warfare is the most effective and correct method of armed struggle.

For this reason, as long as there is a single honest man in Latin America, guerrilla warfare will not die. Armed struggle will surge ahead vigorously until all of the people awake and rise up in arms against the common enemy, us imperialism.

Guerrilla warfare in Bolivia is not dead; it has just begun!

Anti-Critique

Both enemies and friends of the revolution have analysed, more or less profoundly and from a great variety of viewpoints, the complex phenomenon of the guerrilla activity which went on in our country. Guided by petty reasons, they all reach the narrow and biased conclusion that guerrilla warfare is not the correct method for the seizing of power in Bolivia.

Dishonest documents have been put out; accounts have been given which are most biased and slanted; and thus world public opinion has been, to a certain extent, misled in connection with the events. But one thing has not been accomplished: the dulling of the faith and determination of our country's revolutionary forces. The clearest and most unconditional proof of this is the fact that our National Liberation Army (ELN) has remained and still remains staunchly faithful and firm in the struggle, despite the temporary setbacks we have experienced.

Due to circumstances, the duty has fallen to me to explain to the revolutionaries of this country and to those of the whole continent the reasons why, even though we have recently lost a battle, we insist on our position in support of guerrilla warfare as the most effective and surest method for the seizing of power.

Any one of the comrades who have participated and fallen as heroes in this struggle would likewise have done his duty in this regard.

I do this without in the least considering myself the immediate successor of Che Guevara. Being Che's successor would be an undeservedly high honour for me. I am rather acting in my capacity as an accidental heir to the last and most valuable teachings of the greatest revolutionary genius of Latin America.

I harbour the hope that this document will be a contribution to the rich storehouse of revolutionary experiences of our peoples in their struggle for national liberation, and at no time do I seek to justify our mistakes.

Nor are these the lamentations or complaints of an isolated survivor of the guerrilla struggle. On the contrary, it is the full expression of the forces making up the National Liberation Army (ELN), representing our people and having at present the real, staunch, and objective conviction that within the armed struggle guerrilla warfare is the specific method offering the best prospects for achieving our ideals of liberty and social justice.

Specious arguments are being put forth in an effort to prove that the opposite is true. It is adduced that 'The guerrilla forces were crushed' in a relatively short time.

For us, guerrilla warfare is a form of struggle utilized by the people to seize power, it being understood that one essential characteristic of this form of struggle is its more or less protracted nature.

The first phase of any guerrilla struggle consists in the guerrillas being able to survive until they have taken deep roots among the people, mainly among the peasants. The guerrilla nucleus will thus be in a position to renew its forces indefinitely until a stage of development is reached that will render it invincible. From that moment on, the guerrilla forces deal the regular army repeated blows, causing it to become demoralized and progressively weaker until it is finally overcome and destroyed completely, along with the regime it supports.

In our own case, the newly established guerrillas were not able to surmount the first phase, but other guerrilla groups will appear and will attain full development and eventually crush the enemy.

Based on this circumstance, our critics have come to the conclusion that our method is the wrong one. They fail to mention and avoid analyzing the causes of our partial and temporary defeat. The reason they do not do so is that, in so doing, they would have to judge themselves.

They observed our struggle from afar. What is more, they isolated, refused to co-operate with, and carried on anti-guerrilla propaganda against our struggle within the ranks of their own organizations. Later, in order to keep up their 'anti-imperialist' pretence, each one of

their organizations issued a declaration of 'solidarity' with the guerrilla struggle. But, in fact, that 'solidarity' was mere lip service in the guise of moral support which they could not avoid giving to a small group of 'romantic dreamers'.

Dreamers! Yes. But those dreamers constituted and still constitute the only force in Bolivia that has set itself the task of the seizing of power by and for the people.

The Bolivian CP leadership speaks of the Party's preparations for seizing power by 'all methods'. All of the people should and must take part in the seizing of power. For this reason, the people should be prepared to do so, and it is wrong to talk to the people about 'all' methods at a time when preparations for using one of the methods are being made. When a party or a group sets itself the task of seizing power, that party or group must choose a specific method; not to do so is tantamount to not seriously thinking of seizing power.

In an amusing manner, they want the guerrilla method to be scrapped after the first attempt results in failure, and they insist on the feasibility of the 'democratic' or reformist approach in spite of the permanent failure of the latter method.

Let us rule out elections! No serious revolutionary can consider this the road for the taking of power in Bolivia or in any other Latin American country.

How many peaceful demonstrations have been held in which thousands upon thousands of workers and ordinary people have been violently suppressed—with casualties running into the hundreds—by the Government's repressive apparatus? Still fresh in our minds are the events of May and September 1965 during which factory workers and miners were brutally murdered, almost without offering any resistance. We could never forget the bloody 24th of June 1967, when humble and defenceless miners were murdered in cold blood even as our guerrilla force, made up of scarcely 40 men, dealt the murderous army hard blows, inflicting considerable casualties and demoralizing it internally.

We are not against the people's struggles for the sake of obtaining reforms and other gains. But we feel sure these struggles will be much more fruitful and effective when they are waged against a government frightened and weakened by the actions of a guerrilla centre.

It is this guerrilla centre that will prove to the people—with facts—that it is possible to face the power of imperialism and its puppets, and that it is not only possible to face that power, but also that it is possible to win victory over it.

The people—and especially the peasants—will not support something they do not consider as being real. To expect the peasants' support for the armed struggle when this struggle has not yet come into being is to play at insurrection in the same way some 'theorists' of armed struggle do who demand the prior widespread support of the peasantry. The

peasants will only give concrete support to a guerrilla centre when the latter can show that it is strong.

That is why, in the first phase, the aim is for the guerrilla force to grow in strength, to survive on the field of operations. During this phase it is essential for the guerrilla force to be given aid from the cities. Our guerrilla centre was denied this aid by political forces that knew of the existence of our movement.

The political parties which seek to play the vanguard role in our people's anti-imperialist struggle are duty bound to be honest and to give the people an accounting of their actions. These parties are also duty bound to admit their mistakes when they feel they have erred and to explain the actions if they believe these actions to be correct.

How can these parties pay homage to fallen guerrillas when they attacked them as the guerrillas were preparing to fight?

How can the fact be explained that Monje sounded the warning among the ranks of his party against a 'factionist group' deviating from the Party 'line' and that Zamora had Comrade Moisés Guevara—who led a group of followers to join the guerrillas—expelled, for the same reason, from the pro-Chinese CPC.

The people demand and are awaiting an explanation for this double-dealing.

We do not intend to blame the CP for our temporary failure. We do not blame anybody for the outcome of this first phase. Our object is to establish the historic responsibility of the parties which in our country claim to be anti-imperialist fighters.

The Vanguard and the People

Some people think that we are a force in the process of dispersal.

They are wrong. We are at the point of reorganizing our armed command cadres, and we will again take up the struggle in the mountains because we firmly believe that this is the only road that will lead us to the liberation of our people and of Latin America from the clutches of Yankee imperialism.

We are not seeking the formation of a political party.

We shall succeed in the structuring of an armed force capable of facing and defeating the army, the main prop of the present régime in our country.

But we are not going to be the 'fighting arm' of any political party.

We are fully convinced that the guerrilla force is not an auxiliary instrument of some other 'higher form of struggle'. On the contrary, we

believe—and international experience so proves it—that this form of struggle will lead to the liberation of our peoples.

In the heat of the struggle the different forces that have set themselves the goal of liberating their country will unite, and our National Liberation Army (FLN) will be joined by militants from the various parties. Then the true alliance of anti-imperialist forces will be a reality.

The forces of the Left will progressively support and join the guerrilla centre. Our short experience has already proved this fact.

All the leaders of the political parties representing the people whose militancy demands a clear-cut anti-imperialist policy had to support the guerrilla movement. We know that this support is simply formal, but once the guerrilla force passes beyond its first stage the masses will force the leaders to convert this formal support to *de facto* support, lest they be completely isolated from the masses, without anyone to lead.

Only then will the political instrument that the people need for the functioning of their future government emerge.

The liberation of our people can never be the work of one single group or one single political party. In that we agree with the parties of the Left. We need a broad anti-imperialist front. The question is how to achieve this.

Our short experience has shown us that much more was accomplished in a few months of armed struggle than in many years of sitting around tables. Actually, all the parties that expressed their sympathy were uniting around the guerrilla centre, whether or not they want to admit it.

We would have to ask ourselves how these parties would have acted had the guerrilla struggle continued and become stronger. Positions would have been clearly defined, since in an atmosphere of armed struggle, which demands a clear-cut attitude, there isn't much room for demagoguery and deceit.

The title of vanguard of the people or of the working class is not self-bestowed. It is won by leading the people or the class which should become the vanguard in the struggle for their objective—in this particular case, toward national liberation—by joining the anti-imperialist struggle everywhere.

The issuing of mere expressions of solidarity with a given form of anti-imperialist struggle—anti-imperialist in essence and in deed—can only place us in a rear-guard position as regards the leadership of any revolutionary movement. That is why it is not enough to sympathize with the guerrilla force. One must participate in it and attain its leadership by proving that one is the truest exponent of this form of struggle.

To have pretensions of leading the movement before starting it or to

make one's participation in an anti-imperialist movement conditional on who is leading it is a demonstration of sectarianism which is in contradiction with the call to 'anti-imperialist unity'.

It will be the people, and only the people who will bestow the title of vanguard upon those who lead them to their liberation.

More Vietnams

The sectarianism of the so-called vanguard is also made evident in its demands for subordinating the guerrilla leadership to the political leadership. This would lead to the question; to whose political leadership?

Is it, perhaps, a case of dividing the struggle into armed struggle and peaceful struggle by subordinating armed struggle to peaceful struggle?

Or is this an attempt to use armed struggle as a mere instrument of pressure for the 'political struggle' in the cities?

Why not think, instead, of a sole politico-military leadership, considering that, in a state of war—and guerrilla warfare creates a state of war—the most skilled and able revolutionary cadres are to take care of the war?

The struggle waged in the cities must constitute a support for guerrilla action; therefore, the cities cannot lead the guerrillas. It is the guerrillas, as the armed vanguard group of the liberation movement, who should lead the movement. This comes about naturally. To try to do the opposite would be tantamount to rendering the guerrillas inoperative, bogging them down. In short, it would lead them to defeat.

The struggle itself will bring forth its leaders. The true leaders of the people will be forged in the struggle, and no one who considers himself a true revolutionary should insist on leading or fear that his position will be taken from him.

The prolonged nature of the struggle is conducive to a clear awareness of one's goal. The opposing forces become defined, and the principal enemy, Yankee imperialism, shows its true nature. The people are able to see clearly how the imperialists demand that their puppets toe the line more assiduously and that they make clear their intentions.

The imperialists are not about to abandon their markets, to surrender their colonies. That is why the peoples must get ready for a long, hard struggle. To think that we are going to seize power without making sacrifices is to daydream and to create a feeling of apathy among the people.

The struggle will be a cruel and bloody one, and it will be waged throughout the country—even in the most humble huts and isolated regions.

In the face of the constant violence of the Yankee imperialists, we—and the people with us—have chosen the way of revolutionary violence, a violence that punishes the oppressors and that, once it has crushed them, gives way to socialist humanism.

In short, we do not preach violence for its own sake, but rather advocate the people's organized retaliation against organized oppression, in order to achieve full freedom.

Therefore, it will be the entire people, each and every one of the inhabitants of this country, who will contribute by direct action in the cities and in the countryside to bringing about the insecurity, fear, panic, and final defeat of our enemies.

The national liberation movements all over the world are dealing hard blows to the common enemy imperialism. The criminal war in Vietnam, despite the fact that it balances the us economy by converting it into a war economy and thus staving off a crisis, is creating serious problems for the imperialists. All the military power of the Yankees has already been proved ineffective in holding back that glorious people in arms.

The struggle of our Vietnamese brothers is the struggle of all the revolutionaries of the world. They are fighting for us, and we must fight for them. Their war is our war.

The Yankee imperialists cannot withstand another Vietnam. It is up to us and our people to create this second Vietnam, faithful to the legacy left to us by our heroic Major Ernesto Che Guevara.

The idea of creating several Vietnams is no mere whim or the figment of a warmonger mentality, as our enemies and the pseudo-revolutionaries would have others believe; it is an idea in keeping with reality. The Yankee imperialists will not surrender their positions willingly, and on our continent—through its Ministry of Colonies, the oas—they will order their lackeys in the various countries to join forces to crush any people that may rise up in arms.

Continental Revolution

The time for a continental revolution has come.

We must respond to the united front of the militarists of the continent against the revolution, with the unity of all the national liberation movements of the continent.

The frantic squealing of the reactionaries and some pseudo-revolutionaries who oppose the participation of patriots from other countries in our people's liberation struggle is nothing but a reflection of their vain attempts to isolate our movement and collaborate with the enemy by creating feelings of chauvinism among the people.

Our guerrillas were attacked by soldiers of the Bolivian Army advised

by Yankee 'instructors' (veterans of the war in Vietnam) and equipped with weapons and rations supplied by the armies of Argentina and Brazil.

We are sure that, once the guerrillas become a force to be reckoned with in our country and the regular army feels powerless to destroy them, it will receive immediate aid from the armies of several neighbouring countries, in the form of not only war *material* but also soldiers. But then the revolutionary war will extend to those countries, bringing about the same feeling of insecurity and powerlessness among their respective armies. At this point the Pentagon will be forced to change its policy of 'advising' to one of 'direct', ever-growing participation by its troops, as is happening in Vietnam.

Some pseudo-revolutionaries tremble at such a prospect. They wish to spare the people this 'tragedy.' They do not realize that, by acting as they do, they are not avoiding anything. On the contrary, their attitude only serves to keep the people under the scourge of poverty, hunger, and death, sacrificing them on the sacrosanct altar of conformism.

This is no 'tragedy', weighed against what the people would have to suffer if they were kept under their present yoke forever, their only prospect being that it would weigh heavier and heavier upon them.

This is no 'tragedy', weighed against the miserable lives that our people are forced to lead.

Mining towns are nothing but concentration camps, where the inhabitants don't have any rights—not even the right to amuse themselves, and even less, of course, the right to protest.

The massacres that have been systematically perpetrated are the tyranny's answer to the just demands of those who bear on their shoulders the weight of the economy of the country and the luxury of the military castes.

No movement of protest or people's demand is tolerated by the military tyranny, the pillar of the 'democratic' régime in power. Such movements are violently repressed to set an example and maintain the 'principle of authority'. Anyone who rebels against such principles will be made to feel the full weight and brutality of the military régime.

Faced with this brutal reality, should we be held back by the prospect of the sacrifices involved in a just war? Our struggle will not demand any more sacrifices than those made by our people under this tyranny.

That is why the creation of a new Vietnam does not constitute a 'tragedy'. It is an honour and a duty we will never refuse.

Victory or Death!

We have lost a battle, a battle in which the maximum leader of the oppressed people, Major Ernesto Che Guevara, gave his life,

But our war continues, and we will never stop, because we who fought at Che's side do not recognize the word 'surrender'. His blood and that of other fighters, spilled on the soil of Bolivia, will give life to the seed of liberation and will turn our continent into a volcano spewing forth fire and destruction on imperialism.

We will be the triumphant Vietnam that Che, the romantic and heroic visionary, dreamed of and loved.

We are determined to win or die for these ideals.

Cuban comrades died for these ideals.

Peruvian comrades died for these ideals.

Argentine comrades died for these ideals.

Bolivian comrades died for these ideals.

Honour and glory for Tania, Joaquín, Juan Pablo Chang, Moisés Guevara, Jorge Vázquez, Aniceto Reynaga, Antonio Jiménez, and Coco Peredo; honour and glory for each and every one of those who died with weapons in hand, because they understood that, as Che said:

'Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome, provided that this, our battle cry, reach some receptive ear, that another hand be extended to take up our weapons, and that other men come forward to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machine guns and new cries of battle and victory.'

Our banners bear crepe, but will never be lowered.

The ELN considers itself the heir to the teachings and example of Che, the new Bolívar of Latin America.

Those who cravenly murdered him will never kill his thought and his example.

Let the imperialists and their lackeys withhold their songs of victory, because the war has not ended; it has just begun.

We will return to the mountains

Bolivia will again resound to our cry of

VICTORY OR DEATH!

Inti Peredo
Bolivia, July 1968

Acknowledgement

We are indebted for the selection of documents on 'Art after October' to the Italian journal *Rassegna Sovietica*, whose issues over the last few years have been an invaluable source of material on Russian culture in the period following the Revolution.

work

Respect for Parliament has probably never been at a lower ebb in England than it is today. In this article in our series on work, Stan Newens gives a representative account of his experience as an MP. The author is 38. Born in Bethnal Green, he was educated at a grammar school and London University. As a conscientious objector, he did his national service as a coal-miner, and worked for eight years as a secondary-school teacher until he was elected as Labour member for Epping in 1964. He is married, and has two children.

Member of Parliament

When I was declared the Member of Parliament for Epping in October 1964, I had been engaged in active political work for over 15 years. As a convinced socialist, I believed profoundly—and still do—in the need for fundamental political and social change, and regarded my election as a step towards the achievement of this objective. This is not to say that I had any illusions about Parliament as a dynamic instrument of social revolution. Having been on friendly terms with a number of Members of Parliament who shared my outlook in broad terms, I was well aware of some of the difficulties which they had encountered.

My first impressions of the House of Commons as a Member were very ordinary. It reminded me of being a pupil at a new school. I needed to visit a number of officials—at the Lees Office about income tax and National Insurance contributions, at the Serjeant-at-Arms' store to obtain House of Commons stationery—and I was continually asking for directions and losing my way. Everything seemed strange and unfamiliar, and there seemed to be little guidance for the new Member. The outward picturesque survivals, as I increasingly realized once business began in earnest, are manifestations of an attitude which permeates almost every part of the House and its procedures. Almost everything is liable to be hallowed by time-honoured usage and it is to the past that one tends to look for guidance and inspiration. The Chamber was not rebuilt after its destruction in the Second World War to provide seats for all Members, but virtually as a replica of the

former Chamber. Rulings from the Chair are meticulously based on earlier rulings. Nearly everything is connected with tradition, and there is a strong tendency to make decisions according to precedent without reference to the needs of the present. This makes the House of Commons an ideal arena for evasion, procrastination and delay.

It soon dawned upon me, however, that this situation reflects the general realization that the real power of making decisions has been almost entirely withdrawn from Parliament. In fact debates often bear more resemblance to a formalized display of opinions—even a charade—than to a genuine consideration of facts and arguments. On the very day that I took my seat, I found myself next to a Member of many years' experience who said to me: 'You don't want to think that you can get anything in here,' indicating the floor of the House. I did not fully appreciate the point of his remark at the time but I have since then had it demonstrated time and again. Any change of front, any alteration in the form of legislation, must be secured, if it is to be secured at all, by lobbying and consultation before it reaches the floor. Interested parties—whether groups of employers, trade unions, trade associations or others—do all the crucial work behind the scenes. Members of Parliament are not usually consulted on the most critical issues, but are expected to fall into line according to the guidance of the Whip. Although defeat on a minor issue would not be regarded as loss of confidence, the modern British system of government in effect involves Members in the acceptance of a package deal. One cannot take what one approves of and reject the rest. It is all or nothing. If I decide to vote against my Government on a wide range of issues and others do likewise, the Government can no longer rely on our support and its majority is accordingly reduced. If the majority disappears, according to the rules of the game, the Government must resign.

In its origins, this system owes much to the first Prime Minister of Britain, Sir Robert Walpole, probably the greatest exponent of the art of bribery and corruption who ever held high office in this country. By means of this system he kept himself in power from 1721 to 1742, a period not yet equalled by any other Prime Minister. It is apt that his picture—that of a benevolent and bewigged 18th-century gentleman—should still adorn the Cabinet Room to this day. The threat of Government resignation and the consequent need to defend one's seat at a General Election—possibly with the withdrawal of official Party support, and perhaps with another official Party candidate—is a factor which every MP who considers voting against his Party Whip must take into account.

With such enormous pressures on Members, whatever the arguments deployed, it is unlikely in the extreme that a Member will be influenced by what is said during a debate to cast his vote in a way that he was not prepared for previously. Accordingly, debates are not occasions to win over Members' votes, but to get publicity outside the House. This fact became clear to me early on, and like most MPs therefore I now regard press reports of what is said as one of the foremost purposes of any contributions which are made in debate. At first, I expected much more than this but I have now come to terms with the fact that Parliament is

not so much a place for taking decisions as for obtaining publicity and bringing pressure to bear. Even this, however, is not easy.

On numerous occasions I have determined that I would like to speak on a particular subject. In accordance with normal procedure, I have written to the Speaker hoping that I might 'catch his eye' in the debate. For a whole day from 3.30 p.m. I have been in my place with my notes in my hand; these may have taken me the morning to prepare. Each time a Member has sat down after his speech, I have risen in hope but to no avail. I have been called in very few important debates.

There are, of course, other methods of gaining publicity and exercising pressure. If these are effective, they may enhance a Member's chance of being called to speak. One such method is to put down so-called Early Day motions which will never be debated but to which other Members may add their names as an indication of their support. American bombers attacked the oil installations on the outskirts of Hanoi in June 1966. I was one of those who felt very strongly about this and suggested an Early Day motion calling on the Government to dissociate Britain from us policy. This was in due course tabled and received 113 signatures—the highest number on a motion opposing us policy in Vietnam to that date. This caused considerable ferment along with demands in the Chamber for a debate on the subject, and on the strength of Official Opposition support—largely given in order to embarrass the Government whose policy for the most part they approved—a debate was fixed. Eventually, after a lot of running hither and thither, I was called to speak—the only occasion in the two years which I have sat in the House that I have managed to make a contribution in a Foreign Affairs debate.

When the house divided at the end of the debate, without our amendment having been called, it was difficult to decide how we could make our views clear, even if we determined to defy the Whips, without identifying ourselves either with the Government position or with that of the Conservative opposition which was critical only on the grounds that British support of the Americans had wavered over the bombing of Hanoi. Furthermore, it was feared by some of my colleagues that failure to support the Government in the Division lobbies would be represented as a refusal to support Wilson's proposed trip to Moscow, which was announced on the eve of the debate. All sorts of consultations, discussions and exchanges took place, and when the Division was called 32 Members, of whom I was one, refused to vote—most of us sitting in the Chamber while the Division was taken to publicize our position. Some of those who agreed with me entirely on the principle involved voted, while others who were not naturally vocal on the issue abstained. Although many of us regarded the issue as one of conscience, we were not agreed on the way in which we should exercise our dissent.

This was the only occasion on which the war in Vietnam came before the House of Commons for a Division in 1964, '65 or '66. When I spoke from the plinth in Trafalgar Square some months previously on the subject, however, I was booed by a section of the audience on the grounds that I had not voted against the war. The truth is that, for

better or worse, as I tried in vain to explain, the issue had not been presented up to that time in a form in which a vote was possible.

For people outside the House it is difficult to grasp how little power a backbench Member has to determine what issues will be discussed and the dearth of opportunities to put his views forward. All this inevitably has made me even more cynical than I was about the role of Parliament in modern Britain. However, I had my doubts before I was elected. In the case of the Parliamentary Labour Party I originally had more hopes. As a rank-and-file Constituency Labour Party worker until 1960, I had always accepted that the Annual Conference of the Party at national level determined policy. After the 1960 Scarborough Conference passed a resolution in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament in the face of strong opposition from the Party leadership, I became familiar with the doctrine that power lay not with Annual Conference after all, but with the Parliamentary Labour Party. Once I arrived in the Parliamentary Labour Party, I found that power had again apparently taken flight and now resided in the Cabinet.

Meetings of the Parliamentary Party were held at irregular intervals and normally lasted only two hours, a sizeable proportion of time being taken up by Government spokesmen. Only a very small proportion of Members were able to speak within the period available, and resolutions were not normally taken. When they were, discussion was not provided for in the way that it would be in a meeting of a Labour Group on a local authority, although the situation has now changed somewhat. Ministers etc, are not expected to speak unless their departments are involved, whatever their views, and it would be unheard of for a Minister to oppose Government policies in any sphere. So these meetings are in fact not so much an arena in which decisions are made and policy formulated, as one where anxieties are voiced, pressure exerted, and where measurement is taken of the state of opinion among Labour MPs.

In addition to the Parliamentary Party, there is a wide range of subject groups corresponding to the most important departments of Government. Eminent speakers, including the Minister in charge of the Department concerned are invited, and much information can be obtained. But once again, policy-making is not really a function of their activities, and these groups have no power at their disposal. After a period, particularly as I was hard-pressed for time, my attendance at those subject group meetings which I had asked to be included on—Foreign Affairs, Economics, Housing, Education and Agriculture—fell off, and at present I only go on a selective basis. As a former teacher I decided to take a particular interest in the Education group, and largely because I was one of the few to turn up to a particular meeting, I was chosen Chairman of sub-committee to prepare a report on Public Schools. At first we envisaged an ambitious programme of visits to Public Schools and meetings. But the attendance fell off rapidly, and much of the work was not carried out. Ultimately a paper was produced which was presented to the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Doubtless more of this type of work is possible, but it could well be

done equally effectively, if not more so, by groups of interested people who are not MPs. The fact that the deliberations of these groups are merely expressions of opinion robs them of any real importance.

The sense of ineffectiveness is, however, in complete contrast to the outward signs of importance bestowed on a Member. As an ex-miner and schoolteacher, I am still very conscious of being addressed as 'Sir' by every policeman in the House—particularly by men old enough to be my father. I was completely taken aback when I first drove my car out of New Palace Yard and an officer on duty stepped smartly out into Parliament Square to hold up the traffic on my behalf. I am invited to a never-ending list of meetings and special occasions where I am normally treated with great deference.

A very large part of my work is not done at the House at all but in my constituency. Before I was elected I knew that Members received letters, conducted advice bureaux and generally took up constituency problems. But I had no idea how enormous the volume of this work was or would become. In fact the major part of my time is occupied with calls on my service from my constituents. I am a kind of local ombudsman, to whom all and sundry come when they are in difficulties with Government offices, local authorities, the police, the Inland Revenue, their own relatives or anyone else. If a constituent is unable to obtain a house, if he has been refused a pension, if his neighbour's teenage son is taking potshots at the washing on the line in his garden with an airgun, he comes to me. I am deluged the whole year through with a range of problems which concern almost every aspect of life and activity from the most public to the most intimate issues.

My constituency has the second largest electorate in Britain—nearly 100,000—who live in five different local government areas ranging from middle-class London suburb to country villages. I am expected to be an expert in everything from cucumbers to computers. Both are extremely important in my area. On the first Saturday of every month I hold an advice bureau at four different centres and am normally assisted by councillors in this work. A steady stream of constituents keeps me occupied from 9 a.m. to about 7 p.m. Every day I receive about 20 letters. I am telephoned at home at all hours of the day and throughout the week-end. I am never without some work waiting to be done.

However, the problems I have had to deal with have not been limited to those which fall within the sphere of a Government department or some other established authority. Human problems which could only be effectively dealt with by social case workers frequently arise. Many of these stem from divorce and separation, and I have had many people clearly in dire need of psychological help approach me. I have come into contact with the plight of the mentally ill and maladjusted to an extent which I never imagined likely before becoming an MP. Such cases drive home to me how hopeless it is to seek to solve our social problems without a radical overhaul of our social services and our society as a whole.

Even to write the letters and file the correspondence which I receive is

more than I am properly equipped for. In reality, I require a full-time secretary and an office. In fact, I make do with a room in my own house, a filing cabinet in my bedroom, the services of a number of casual typists who take down my letters in their own homes, and my wife's services as a filing clerk and telephonist. Of course, I also have a desk and a filing cabinet at the House of Commons, but as this is in a room with 15 other Members' desks and no secretary can use it, I am not normally able to do the bulk of my work there. This lack of proper facilities for MPs is a great handicap particularly when there are so many calls on one's time.

The work then is hard and never-ending. The pressure is such that I do not have sufficient time to read books, study the news or to see TV programmes as I did in the past. Moreover, I am always conscious that I must not lose sight of the fundamental reasons which originally led me to devote my leisure time to political work and eventually to Parliament. This would be easy to do without realizing it since the environment in which I now move is so very different from that in which I began. Before becoming an MP I was never subject to the same compulsion to weigh the disadvantages of losing vital support for a particular project against the need to stand firm on principle perhaps for what seems a triviality.

On the issues of socialism and opposition to war, on capital punishment and abortion law reform, on racial prejudice (on which I have certainly lost votes) the issues are much too great to be sacrificed for any gains. But I would not attempt to deny that on some issues of lesser importance in my eyes I have yielded to what appears to be the overwhelming volume of immediate advantage. On the vital issue of supporting the Labour Government I am constantly aware that, in the establishment of the principle of comprehensive schools, in the ending of evictions from normal rented property, in the advances it has made in social security and in many other spheres, it is doing a job that I regard as vital despite all the shortcomings. Yet at the same time I believe that I should be wrong to vote for Government support for American policy in Vietnam or an economic policy which I felt to be fundamentally mistaken, whatever the pressures.

All the same, common endeavours and experiences in the face of archaic procedures and close personal contacts take the edge off political antagonism. The atmosphere of the bars which do not keep normal licensing hours, of dinners and social functions which cut across party allegiances, blur differences of principle and overlay them with genuine ties of personal friendship and respect. At the same time one is more and more cut off from one's roots. Evenings are often spent in the House or at constituency engagements of a non-partisan character. Less and less time is available for meeting and discussing with ordinary people who are not connected with some organization or another. The increase in MPs' pay, moreover—though a very large slice goes in carrying out one's duties—removed the real financial hardship which was the lot of Members without private means before the 1964 General Election. As a Member therefore one is subjected to a very strong though subtle influence away from the working-class back-

ground which one may previously have been accustomed to. Compromise, the toning down of extreme points of view, pragmatism, appear much more reasonable than ever before—even if one is not fully conscious of the change of emphasis.

Men whom a Member of Parliament before election never met and whom he regarded as implacably opposed to all he stood for, accept him as an equal and as a feature of the establishment. It is easy to conclude that class barriers are a figment of the imagination of the immature and of those with a grievance, and to fit cosily into one's environment, unaware that all that has happened in reality is that one has penetrated those barriers which are, despite this, as real as ever, particularly for those who have not been elected Labour MPs.

Thus in viewing my work as an MP I have mixed emotions. I am frustrated and sceptical at my inability to influence events or policy making, but anxious to keep a Labour Government in power. I derive satisfaction from my constituency work, but begrudge the enormous inroads into my time which it makes. At times I am subjected to a stream of hostile, even abusive letters, and I feel downhearted at the obvious dissatisfaction with what I am doing. Yet at other times I receive encouraging letters, expressions of gratitude and even offers of help.

My work as an MP has left me more convinced than ever of the need for drastic social change even though I often despair of achieving it. It has left me convinced of the existence of a whole range of problems at the individual level which will never even be tackled unless far more of our national resources are devoted to housing, health services, education and social welfare. In this respect my socialist convictions are deeper than ever, for if such vast problems exist in a highly developed country like Britain, how much more must they exist in the world at large. Therefore, frustrated as I am, I still believe that my work as an MP is worthwhile. Whenever I am asked, I am reluctant to concede that I enjoy it but at least at the present I am glad to be there and intend in the future to do what I can to remain.

Stan News

discussion

Trotsky's Marxism

Roberto Yepe writes: Dear Comrades—the theoretical journal *Pensamiento Crítico* here has recently published Nicolas Krassó's article 'Trotsky's Marxism', and promises Ernest Mandel's reply 'Trotsky: an Anti-Critique'; readers have been very concerned with it. I would like to make some comments on the debate.

Krassó's location of Trotsky's 'sociologism' as the source of his weaknesses represents a considerable advance in the study of this passionate revolutionary. Trotsky's shortcomings in his analysis of the Chinese Revolution illustrate this vividly. But Krassó's dictum that Trotsky had 'the virtues of his vices' is mere dialectical rhetoric. We are told that when he was first to return to Russia in 1903 and became the major revolutionary agitator in St Petersburg, this was because he represented *par excellence* the non-party man. Does this also explain why he arrived after Lenin in 1917? How can his theses on 'permanent revolution' prior to October, with all the lucidity contained in them, be explained by his 'vices'? Perhaps Lenin's vices were all the greater, considering his indisputably greater virtues. . .

These are minor points, of course. The central defect of Krassó's articles is their treatment of revolutions that failed. He may have a strong case with the British General Strike of 1926. But what about France and Italy? Was failure in these countries solely due to a 'problematic' political situation there? Was the defeat of the Greek Revolution only caused by 'Anglo-American invasion', as Krassó states? The Vietnamese would be in a very bad way if this were an insuperable obstacle to revolutions: or do the Vietnamese victories at Saigon or Cuban victories at Playa Giron lack 'consistent unity'?

It is true that Krassó's prejudices are not against revolutions, but only against those which fail: he writes of the Chinese Revolution with esteem. But even this I find insulting. Can any unbiassed person claim innocence of the political leadership in the defeat of the Greek Revolution, the Filipino or many others? Were these factors foreign to social conditions, existing in a fateful, autonomous empyrean of their own? Surely material facts exist, whatever they are, and we interpret and act on them in different ways. Properly or improperly. In the case of the Communist International, everybody today agrees that there was a strong influence of the centre, which in time acquired an undue and aberrant character. Some folded to it and some did not. Others respected the rhetoric—perhaps because they believed in it in a way—and made the revolution. Praise to them: Mao. But those who did not give in have at least the right to some merit. Those who merely obeyed had value only prior to their genuflections. Will Krassó argue that they were right in spite of them? Their virtues for their vices. I, as a Cuban, do not have so much flexibility. The chain of officialdom in the 'churches of the left' of Latin America today is eloquent. Against them is an example where temporary failure overtook correct leadership: Che in Bolivia. Did the stroke of good

luck of an inefficient, corrupt and murderous military clique there convince Krassó of another impossibility? He writes of the small numbers of the Spanish Communist Party in 1936. Should I remind him that Batista always contended that Fidel's rebels represented nobody because they were a few hundreds and the Cuban nation was seven million?

I consider all these status quo judgments on revolutions that failed as pernicious and unrepresentative of a journal that can offer an article like Göran Therborn's 'From Petrograd to Saigon' in the same issue. This is not to deprecate the importance of Krassó's intellectual effort to clarify Trotsky's words and deeds: a new and sophisticated appraisal of Trotsky is undoubtedly needed.

Havana 1968

Nicolas Krassó replies: 1. By saying that Trotsky had the virtues of his vices I did not, of course, say that all his virtues were due to his vices.

2. As I wrote in my reply to Ernest Mandel: '... the fact is that the Comintern did not in the last instance determine the fate of the revolutionary movements of every country in the world. . . The vulgar anti-Communist conviction that the "Kremlin" was responsible for every eruption of social discontent or revolution anywhere in the world here finds its vulgar Marxist opposite: the Kremlin becomes responsible for every suppression of social discontent and every victory of counter-revolution.' And: 'Those parties with enough vitality to ignore Comintern advice were those which had enough combative power to win the revolution. Those which docilely complied with mistaken directives of the Comintern were not those likely to rout the bourgeoisie.' But it is true that while docility towards Moscow was due to the weakness of the movements in question, the consequence of this docility—Comintern interference—led to further weakening and degeneration. This was a vicious circle. And Roberto Yepe is right in stressing the over-centralized nature of the Comintern (which in any case came more and more to be a bureaucratic appendix of Russian foreign policy).

When I wrote of certain situations being 'problematic' from the revolutionary point of view, I was not denying that Moscow policy was often an important negative factor, but just pointing out that ~~one~~ factor should not be isolated, absolutized and made out to be more decisive than it actually was. Moreover, I stated quite unambiguously that 'Of course Stalin's policies were wrong in France, Italy and—above all—Germany. I emphasized in my original essay the successive blunders of the Third International. Moreover, Trotsky's critique of the Comintern policies in Germany was excellent.' There would not be much point in going into details here, into the differences between the Vietnamese and Greek situations etc. (The Stalin-Churchill 'spheres of influence' agreement was of course a very important factor as far as Greece was concerned). I agree with Roberto Yepe: our attitudes towards movements of the past should not be determined by the mere fact of their failure or success. Trotsky's attitudes were often voluntaristic and romantic—but his outlook (*Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni*) was still vastly superior to the philistinism of the status quo outlook. I think that Roberto Yepe is wrong in attributing the latter outlook to my essays.

Nicolas Krassó replies to Tamara Deutscher (See NLR 50)

Tamara Deutscher's letter concerning my reply to Ernest Mandel (NLR 48) contains both what she calls 'more serious criticisms' and also comments on some 'pardonable simplifications'.

I 'More serious criticisms':

1. Tamara Deutscher is right to question my claim that Isaac Deutscher 'makes clear that the quotation from Lenin "There was no better Bolshevik

-than Trotsky" is mere hearsay'. Originally there was a longer passage in my article where I discussed three kinds of references to Trotsky made by Lenin. First of all, substantial ones like the 'Will', the Trade Union discussion, etc., where he criticizes Trotsky's administrative-statistic outlook. Secondly, oblique ones: according to Gorky, Lenin, when asked about his relationship with Trotsky, avoided the answer by praising Trotsky's unique talent and achievement as organizer of the Red Army. Thirdly, there are statements which Lenin made in order to stress his confidence in, and comradeship with, Trotsky—in order to defend him against demagogic attacks concerning his non-Bolshevik past. To this last category belongs the one made in November 1917, in which Lenin said that 'since Trotsky understood that there could be no union between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, there has been no better Bolshevik'. This is clearly a general statement, generous, politic and polite, made *en passant* but with an important and specific purpose. Trotsky's use of it in *The Stalin School of Falsification* was fully justified, but this does not mean that it is to be taken quite literally, or given serious theoretical status. The words 'mere hearsay' got into the text when, for reasons of space, this part of my article was abridged.

2. I phrased Bukharin's words (not Kamenev's as Tamara Deutscher believes, and as *The Prophet Unarmed* leaves ambiguous) differently from the wording given in Isaac Deutscher's book. This is due to the fact that I originally quoted it from Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (OUP 1963, p. 258; Peter Sedgwick's translation). As these words are very well-known, I did not originally give my source; in the editing of the article, a footnote was added which inadvertently gave Isaac Deutscher as the reference for the quoted conversation, and slightly modified the Serge/Sedgwick version to align it with Deutscher's, the result being a hybrid of the two. This is regrettable, but I think the difference in the two versions is very slight indeed.

II 'Pardonable simplifications':

'Isaac disagreed, of course, with Krassó's premise that "the necessary point of departure to assess Trotsky and Stalin is Lenin"'. Tamara Deutscher says that, having this premise, I seem 'to drag Trotsky onto the ground of the Leninist cult' which (as Isaac Deutscher wrote) 'Trotsky was forced to accept . . . though his rational mind and European tastes were outraged by it'. The tastes of all Marxists—whether European or belonging to any other continent—ought to be outraged by it, and I do not think that I have anything to do with it, or could ever be forced to accept it. But I think that the only real way of fighting the Lenin *cult*—both in its Stalinist and its Trotskyist forms—is to oppose to it *Lenin*. I was trying to show that to present Trotskyism as 'the Leninism of our age' is as absurd as to present Stalinism as being that. I fully agree that 'The uniform of Lenin's disciple was, anyhow, too tight for him' (for Trotsky: Tamara Deutscher quoting Isaac Deutscher). In my view, not just the Lenin cult but also authentic Leninism was a battleground upon which Trotsky was 'most vulnerable'. In a sense, it is on this that both my articles centre.

My aim was not 'to render all the nuances of Isaac's treatment of Trotsky', but to work out those nuances that were relevant to *my* essay. Both my treatment and Isaac Deutscher's treatment of Trotsky could easily be presented as simplistic in terms of the other, but I think that in both cases such a judgment would be based on a misunderstanding, since the approaches and aims are of a very different nature. Moreover, in my view, what Tamara Deutscher calls 'more serious criticisms' are in fact trivial, while what she calls 'pardonable simplifications' would be very serious, if the accusations were justified.

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new left review

Festival of the Oppressed
France 1968 - Special Issue

André Glucksmann Strategy and Revolution

Ernest Mandel Lessons of May

J-M Vincent The PCF and its History

André Gorz The Way Forward

Lenin on Students

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COVER 'Revolutions are festivals of the oppressed and the exploited . . . At such times the people are capable of performing miracles, if judged by the limited, phillistine yardstick of gradualist progress. But it is essential that leaders of the revolutionary parties, too, should advance their aims more comprehensively and boldly at such a time, so that their slogans shall always be in advance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, serve as a beacon . . . and show them the shortest and most direct route to complete, absolute and decisive victory . . . We shall be traitors, betrayers of the revolution, if we do not use this festive energy of the masses and their revolutionary ardour to wage a ruthless and self-sacrificing struggle for the direct and decisive path. Let the bourgeois opportunists contemplate the future reaction with craven fear. The workers will not be intimidated.' V. I. Lenin: *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy*, 1905.

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introduction

The May Revolution in France was foreseen by nobody. It burst upon the world without warning. It did not fit any pre-conceived pattern. At first glance France seemed the capitalist country least likely to be shaken by social upheaval. Unlike Britain it was not in the throes of a chronic economic crisis. Unlike the United States it was not disturbed by a long, vicious and fruitless war. Unlike Italy it was not faced with the breakdown of a fragile parliamentary coalition. Unlike West Germany or Japan it did not even have a record of intense student militancy. Yet it was in France that the storm broke.

Paris was not Petrograd; May did not reach October. The Revolution was not finally achieved. Indeed, the State apparatus not only was not broken but, in some ways, emerged strengthened from its ordeal. Yet we should see the May Revolution primarily as a victory and not as a defeat. For years the Left in Europe has been writing 'Letters From Afar', attempting analysis, expressing solidarity, discussing strategy. Now the struggle has suddenly arrived at home. The struggle of Vietnam, of Cuba, of Portuguese Guinea, can be seen to be our own struggle, not just symbolically, but effectively, with a real possibility of success. The direct impact of one on the other has recently been analysed in these pages by Göran Therborn¹. Revolutionaries in France learned the lesson the Vietnamese have taught—imperialism is vulnerable everywhere. In an advanced capitalist country, revolution was placed on the agenda. The revolutionary upsurge which swept France was unprecedented in scale. It penetrated every sector of national life, every region of the country. More than ten millions stopped work: not only students and industrial workers, but peasants, intellectuals, school children, shop assistants, even TV news-readers, astronomers at the Meudon Observatory and strip-tease girls at the Folies Bergères. Immigrant workers from Algeria, Spain and Portugal, never unionized, struck for the first time. Universities and factories throughout the country were occupied. The scale of these events was far greater than 1936 or other comparable movements such as the British or Belgian General Strikes, the Argentinian *Plan de Lucha* of 1964, or the 1905 Revolution in Russia.

During a revolution millions and tens of millions of people learn in a

¹ Göran Therborn, 'From Petrograd to Saigon', *NLR* 48.

week more than they do in a year of ordinary, somnolent life,' wrote Lenin. Before May almost every writer on socialist strategy in Western Europe assumed that no sudden cataclysm would occur, that there would be no general uprising or revolutionary strike. Endless articles and books were written about the integration of the working class into capitalist society. The whole apparatus of sociology—polls, tests, questionnaires—was brought to bear, not only by bourgeois scholars but also by socialists, in order to show that the working class had lost its impulse to challenge the status quo. Concepts like 'apathy', 'depoliticization', 'absorption', 'integration', loomed large in debate. We know now that all this speculation is utterly discredited. Advanced capitalist society does not reduce all its citizens into helpless automata, incapable of exercising free and independent action. The wellspring of revolt has not dried up. The BERLIET workers provided its symbol when they changed the sign above their factory to its anagram—LIBERTE.

Useless Models

How do we explain this sudden switch of consciousness, this abrupt reversal from acceptance to rebellion, from obedience to mutiny? First, it is plain, we must reject all the ideological theories and misleading models of attitude change developed by bourgeois sociology: balance models, dissonance models, congruence models. They teach us nothing. Their ideological content is painfully obvious. They refuse to admit that the mind can act except according to the most shallow and stunted bourgeois 'common sense' and 'rationality'. All must seek equilibrium and order. Every possibility of disorder and unreason must be discounted and expelled. Danger must be suppressed or corrected by homeostatic mechanisms. It is not difficult to understand why these theories flourish in the universities.

A previous salient example of the inability of sociologists to cope with sudden outbreaks of working-class militancy was provided by the episode of the Vauxhall works at Luton, recently analysed by Robin Blackburn.² John H. Goldthorpe, writing in the *British Journal of Sociology* (September 1966), reported his findings that no less than 77 per cent of the car workers he had studied enjoyed 'a co-operative attitude to management'. Yet scarcely one month after the publication of Goldthorpe's study the Vauxhall workers broke into open rebellion. Goldthorpe had been able to detect 'little tendency to interpret employer-worker relations in fundamentally "oppositional terms"' but this did not stop the workers trying to storm the main offices and fight with security guards. That outbreak involved one factory. The May Revolution in France involved hundreds of factories, shops and work-places. But the situation is basically the same. We need a theory of dual consciousness, a theory which can take account of abrupt and unexpected alternations and switches. Just as history shows uneven and combined development, so too does consciousness.

This means that we must reject those traditional theories of strategy

² 'Inequality and Exploitation', *NLR* 42; also published in *The Incompatibles: Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus*: New Left Review/Penguin, 1967.

and tactics which have postulated and emphasized the gradual growth of consciousness. The strategy of 'structural reforms' has often presupposed a struggle which passes through graduated phases of campaigns for limited objectives. During each phase consciousness rises to a higher level. This model of consciousness envisages a step-by-step escalation, consistent and uni-directional, till finally full and authentic consciousness is achieved. It envisages the gradual growth of a mass party, directed phase by phase and step by step by an enlightened vanguard until eventually a moment of crisis is reached and the process culminates in revolution.

This is true even of the Bolshevik Party. As Trotsky pointed out, in February 1917 the masses ran ahead of the party, the party ran ahead of the leadership. When Lenin arrived at the Finland Station, determined to shift the leadership leftwards, people thought he had gone mad. In the Tauride Palace, Bogdanov interrupted his reading of the April Theses with cries of 'Delirium, the delirium of a madman'. 'I came out on to the street,' wrote Sukhanov, 'feeling as though on that night I had been flogged over the head with a flail.' Raskolnikov remarked: 'The most respectable party workers were here. But for them too the words of Ilych were a veritable revelation. They laid down a Rubicon between the tactics of yesterday and those of today.' The April Theses were published with a disclaimer in *Pravda* itself. Lenin was in a minority. Later, during June and July, the Bolshevik Party, under Lenin's leadership, found itself forced to put a brake on the masses, to call them off the streets. The October insurrection was opposed by a large minority: Kamenev, Zinoviev, Rykov, Frunze and others, both 'practicals' and 'theoreticals'. During the flat normal expanses of time before February the Bolsheviks seemed far to the left; during the months between February and October the masses ran ahead of the vanguard. Their final coincidence produced the victorious assault on the Winter Palace.

Revolutionary Tasks

The task of the revolutionary party is to prolong the period of abnormality, to preclude any return to normality. As Lenin and Mao Tse-tung repeatedly stress, the revolutionary party strives to increase the magnitude of the revolutionary forces and to exacerbate the contradictions and vacillations of the enemy. This is not the way in which the French Communist Party responded to the May upheaval. Indeed, its attitude exemplified precisely the doctrine of Kautsky: 'The object of the mass strike cannot be to *destroy* the State power; its only object can be to wring concessions from the government on some particular question, or to replace a hostile government by one that would be more yielding to the proletariat . . . But never, under any conditions, can it lead to the *destruction* of State power; it can only lead to a certain *shifting* of the relation of forces within the State power . . . The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of State power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government.' The model which Lenin contrasted to that of Kautsky was, of course, the Paris Commune.

The French Communist Party has defended its policy by pointing to the likelihood of civil war. Its critics have stressed the ease with which the Revolution could have been accomplished. Both may be right. Socialist insurrection itself might well have been almost bloodless as it was in Petrograd. But, as after October, civil war might have ensued. It is possible to doubt whether the French bourgeoisie would have conceded defeat in the same way that the Cuban bourgeoisie did, or that De Gaulle would have proved to have as little determination as Batista. If there had been a civil war, foreign intervention might certainly have followed, even if covert and disguised. But such obvious considerations do nothing to excuse the attitude taken by the French Communist Party. Marx always argued that the Commune was not aggressive enough—precisely because it feared to start a Civil War. The Commune should have marched on Versailles. Its motto should have been that of Danton: 'Audacity, more audacity, still more audacity!' Lenin endorsed Marx's views after 1905: he again alluded to this text shortly before the October Revolution. Neither Marx nor Lenin had the slightest doubt that the possibility of defeat was no excuse for restraint, once the masses had shown united strength and determination.

The French Communist Party went to great lengths actually to prevent the union of the revolutionary forces. It deliberately locked the gates of factory works all over France in case some student Volodarsky should gain entry and speak to the workers. Workers were instructed not to stay in the factories but to go back home, while only trusted party militants manned the gates. The Communist Party thus refused to offer anything except traditional trade union and electoral demands. It opted decisively for parliamentary politics—the politics which it had been fostering during the previous years and to which, no doubt, it felt its prestige was attached. It rejected the actuality of a new politics and held fast to the old. It chose the ballot box rather than occupation of the factories, universities and streets. The choice was not simply between two kinds of tactics but between two kinds of consciousness—and, ultimately, two kinds of society. The voter in the polling booth is pre-eminently private, atomized, serialized, as Sartre has put it. In the occupied factory, in the Soviet-style assembly, political life is public, collective; individuals may form fused groups. It is not surprising that the parliamentary elections produced a massive victory for Gaullism. The structure of bourgeois elections makes them part and parcel of the bourgeois order, bourgeois society and the bourgeois State. In the polling booth every worker may lose his class. The context determines the consciousness.

The democracy of the Soviet is completely different and necessarily produces a completely different kind of majority, incompatible with the old order. Insurrection, as Lenin emphasized, is not simply Blanquism: it cannot succeed unless it commands the support and allegiance of a strategic majority. Mao-Tse-Tung repeatedly makes the same point about People's Revolutionary War. The French Communist Party sought a return to normality, to the idyll of bourgeois politics and capitalist parliaments, to the dream of an electoral majority; it condemned itself to failure. The revolution demanded the prolongation of abnormality, the production of a new order of consciousness: latent

aspirations and ideas, suffocated by ordinary life, would become manifest and dominant—an authentic new majority would inaugurate a new epoch.

The example of revolutionary politics came from outside the traditional working-class movement, from the students and from youth in general. In Régis Debray's phrase, the students were the 'small motor' which set the 'large motor' in action. They were the detonator, the single spark which started a prairie fire: the police repression of students in the Latin Quarter had the same kind of effect as the Nanking Road incident in Shanghai, when police opening fire on demonstrators led to a massive wave of strikes and boycotts throughout China, the May 30 Movement. Enough has been written elsewhere about the contradictions in modern capitalist society which have made the university into the weakest link in the chain, the most vulnerable point: the contradictions between the traditional 'independence' and 'freedom' of the academy and the demands of advanced capitalism for the production of trained personnel; the contradiction between the increasingly important role of youth in the market and the deliberately retarded childhood imposed on the student by autocratic and paternalistic administrations; the contradictions within bourgeois ideology itself which make sociology faculties paradoxically the producers of Marxist revolutionaries, and so on. The important thing is that the students of Western Europe have turned out to be not imaginary monsters of conformity but, in Tom Nain's words, 'real monsters, walking paragraphs from the *Manuscripts of 1844* and the *Grundrisse*'.³ They have joined the students of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the revolutionary struggle. There was a time when the occupation of universities in Japan, Iran or Argentina seemed part of a separate realm of politics, divorced from the realities of Europe. Now Berlin, Rome, New York, London, San Francisco stand alongside Tunis, Montevideo and Mexico City.

Events and Contexts

It should not be forgotten that, although the May Revolution was completely unexpected and novel, though it shattered the conventional 'reality' of Western Europe, the forms which the Revolution took were classical. The scenario of Revolution, once the possibility of revolt was established, was orthodox and recapitulated the experience of the past. Partly, perhaps, this classicality of the May Revolution is due precisely to its novelty. The actual events which took place were almost all familiar in the context of revolutionary action—though totally unfamiliar, of course, in the context of the recent history of a Western capitalist country. On one level, the May Revolution turned back to the past; it fell into place as a sequel to the revolutionary traditions of France. The barricades inevitably recalled those of the Commune. The occupation of the factories and the general strike recalled 1936. In another sense too the past made itself felt. The Communist movement, ever since the late twenties, has made every effort to destroy marxist and revolutionary organizations outside itself. May 1968 saw the return of the repressed. The past of the Bolshevik Revolution had its vengeance

³ *The Beginning of the End*, Panther Books 1968.

on the formal heirs who have so totally suppressed it, producing in Russia itself the deep sickness of a society without memory. Within the student movement the Communist Party was unable to play a leading role of any kind and leadership passed to other currents and organizations, representative of the whole spectrum of Marxist and even extra-Marxist, anarchist thought: Maoist, Trotskyist, Situationist.

Certainly there was no organization which corresponded to the Bolshevik Party. To begin with, there is the question of size. In February 1917 the Bolshevik Party had about 30,000 adherents, in April 70,000, in July 240,000. In the space of a few months it doubled, re-doubled and doubled again. In France the situation was completely different. One giant mass party, the Communist Party, already existed but was declining in membership. No other organization was anything like large enough to challenge the hold of the Communist Party. The kind of dynamic achieved by the Bolshevik Party was simply out of the question. It is this fact which partly explains the failure of the Revolution. In comparison with Petrograd there were three striking absences. First, there was no organized movement of Soviets, no clear-cut situation of dual power. There were moves in this direction, at Nantes in particular, but not in Paris itself. Secondly, there was no political work done in the army, despite the fact that much of it was so doubtful in its allegiance that De Gaulle planned to move fresh troops in from Germany as the spearhead of his counter-revolutionary force. Indeed, when troops were brought into Paris to clean up the streets, they were shielded from contact with civilians by detachments of the CRS. Thirdly, there was no diffusion of effective political slogans.

This last absence is perhaps the most telling of all. In one sense, there was a plethora of slogans: picturesque inscriptions which expressed the carnivalesque and millenarian dimensions of the revolution, its vital *elan*. Without this impulse towards carnival there would have been no revolution: the same impulse made itself felt in Petrograd with revolutionary fêtes and theatre in the streets. But there was no organization in Paris which was able to provide the carefully chosen, related and generalized slogans of the Bolsheviks in October: Power to the Soviets, Peace to the Nations, Land to the Peasants, Bread to the Hungry. Partly, of course, this was due to the suddenness of events. Partly, though, it was due to a failure of analysis and argument which showed itself in the transformation of free assemblies such as the Odeon Theatre into circuses and happenings. Finally, it was due to the fact that there was no way of diffusing slogans and therefore no pressure to think of them. It is instructive to compare France with Czechoslovakia: in Prague a vast popular movement was oriented and informed by pirate radio stations and copious street newspapers, whereas in Paris communications remained primitive. In this respect the action of French radio and tv was very ambiguous: it neither supported, nor disowned the Gaullist régime with the result that it neither acted effectively in favour of revolution itself nor forced revolutionaries to find their own ways and means of broadcasting.

Three Lessons

For Britain there are three principal lessons of the May Revolution.

First, it underlines with tremendous force the importance of Marxist theory and revolutionary culture. The student revolt in France achieved an international peak, at least partly because—with all their faults—French intellectuals have in the last 10 years created perhaps the most advanced Marxist culture in the world. Every French student is the natural heir of this cumulative development. The instruments of ideological liberation are not invented in a night. The incipient revolutionary Left in Britain desperately needs—and lacks—the capacious reservoir of ideas which was so readily available in France. The production and circulation of theory is thus itself an indispensable preliminary practice.

Secondly, the May events highlighted the potential of small revolutionary groups in helping to unleash a class storm that shook society to its foundations. The feuds that had historically divided these groups in France were forgotten in the unity of actual struggle; in this decisive test, it was their common combativity, not their different doctrines, that counted. The revolutionary Left in Britain has a chance of abbreviating the process which took place in France, by learning the lesson. United revolutionary action is the priority today; united revolutionary organization is the horizon tomorrow. The Vietnam Solidarity Campaign and the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation may be seen as the first, embryonic expressions of this form of politics.

Thirdly, the May events vindicated the fundamental socialist belief that the industrial proletariat is the revolutionary class of advanced capitalism, whose collective social power—once liberated—could transform our societies beyond imagination. It has, at the same stroke, made indisputable the vital revolutionary role of intellectuals, of all generations. The combination of the two was precisely the chemical formula which produced the shattering explosion of May. In Britain, the working-class has visibly begun to secede from its traditional reformist party, but it has not gained any decisive new orientation. Meanwhile, a student revolt is emerging for the first time in our history. The immediate future may depend on a convergence of the two. The link between them can only be provided by revolutionary socialists.

We have decided to devote this issue of the review to a single theme: the political meaning of the upheaval of May 1968 in France. As Tom Nairn has recently written: 'Every existing theory becomes inadequate before it. Every sacred truth is shown up as partial, in the face of it, and ideas must patiently reform around it until our awareness has caught up with reality.' Already the literature on the events is immense, in France and elsewhere. We have chosen the articles in this issue with a view to conveying something of the diversity of analysis on the revolutionary Left, and of the theoretical developments which the May revolt has produced.

Ernest Mandel's article decisively refutes the reformist arguments

marshalled by the French Communist Party to show that the French workers supposedly wanted nothing beyond immediate economic gains, and documents the rich variety of forms that working-class action took from factory to factory. Jean-Marie Vincent's examination of the Communist Party itself studies the historical roots of its conduct in May, and the character of the political education it has given the French proletariat. André Gorz, by contrast, is concerned less with what happened in May than with what did not happen; his essay discusses the preconditions for a successful repetition of the French upsurge, in conditions where the class enemy is now forewarned. Lastly, we are publishing a complete translation of André Glucksmann's eloquent and elegant book *Stratégie et Révolution en France 1968*. This is the fundamental theoretical document of the younger generation of students and intellectuals who launched the movement of May. Its analysis of the key political and strategic problems of revolutionary struggle is a signal guide to action, not only in France but in Britain and every other advanced capitalist country. To complete this collection we include a document from another time and place which nonetheless has never been more contemporary than it is today, in Britain as in France. This is a crucial and little-known article by Lenin on the relation of student struggles to working-class revolution.

An essential complement to this number of the review is Tom Nairn's essay in *The Beginning of the End* (Panther Books), which is the most ambitious and original attempt so far made to analyse the 'new contradictions' that detonated the 'old contradictions' in May 1968—even though it could be argued that, by concentrating almost exclusively on the former, the problem of which contradictions were dominant and which determinant is left unanswered. We hope that all socialists who have not already done so will read and discuss it. We would also urge our readers to get two pamphlets produced in Britain which make important contributions to the debate on the French upheaval: *The Struggle Goes On*, by Tony Cliff and Ian Birchall (International Socialism Pamphlet, 36 Gilden Road, London N.W.5), and *Paris: May 1968* (Solidarity Pamphlet, 53a Westmoreland Road, Bromley, Kent).

The Lessons of May 1968

The revolutionary wave of May 1968 constitutes an immense reservoir of social experience. The inventory of this experience is as yet far from complete. What characterized that wave was precisely the irruption onto the historical stage of the creative energy of the masses, multiplying forms of action, initiatives and daring innovations in the struggle for socialism. Only by drawing on this reservoir, by basing itself on these gains, can the workers' revolutionary movement arm itself effectively to complete the task whose possibility and necessity were both confirmed by May 1968: the victory of the socialist revolution in the highly industrialized countries of Western Europe.

For several years now a very interesting debate has been carried on, around the definition of a new socialist strategy in Europe.¹ The events of May 1968 have settled a whole number of the key questions posed in this debate. At the same time, they have raised other questions. They have also obliged those who

abstained from the debate to participate in it in their turn, even if only by falsifying the facts of the case. Hence we should go over the principal themes of this discussion, and examine them in the light of the experience of May 1968.

1. Neo-Capitalism and the Objective Possibilities of Revolutionary Action by the Western Proletariat

Contradicting the myths of the bourgeoisie, which have been repeated by Social Democracy and even by certain authors who claim to be Marxists, the revolutionary wave of May 1968 has proved that neo-capitalism is unable to attenuate the economic and social contradictions inherent in the system to an extent that precludes any mass action which is objectively revolutionary in scope.

The struggles of May 1968 were the direct result of the contradictions of neo-capitalism.

Such a violent eruption of mass struggle; a general strike involving ten million workers and accompanied by factory occupations; the spread of the movement to many strata peripheral to the proletariat and the middle class ('old' and 'new')—all this would be incomprehensible if there were not a profound and irrepressible discontent among the workers, induced by the everyday reality of proletarian existence. Those who were blinded by the rise in the standard of living during the last 15 years did not understand that it is precisely in periods when the productive forces are increasing (periods of accelerated 'economic growth') that the proletariat acquires new needs, and that the gap between their needs and the available purchasing power grows wider.² Neither did they understand that as the workers' standard of living, technical skill and culture improved, the absence of social equality and freedom in the work-place and the intensified alienation within the productive process would become a heavier and less tolerable burden on the backs of the proletariat.

Neo-capitalism's ability to attenuate somewhat the extent of economic fluctuation, and the absence of a catastrophic economic crisis like that of 1929, concealed from too many observers its inability to avoid recessions. The contradictions that undermined the long phase of growth that the system had known in the West since the end of the Second World War (and in the USA, from the beginning of the War); the irreducible opposition between the necessity to ensure growth at the

¹ Any list of the articles and pamphlets that refer to this debate is bound to be incomplete. As a reminder, I refer the reader to the articles that appeared in *Les Temps Modernes*, August–September 1964 (Mandel, Santi, Poulantzas, Declercq-Guilheneuf, Trentin, Ingrao, Tutino, Anderson, Topham, Lieberman); in *International Socialist Journal*, nos. 7, 8, 9 and 10, 1965 (Prager, Basso, Herkommer, Therborn, Marchal, J-M Vincent, Marcuse, Mallet, Mandel, Gorz, Topham); books by André Gorz, Serge Mallet, Pierre Naville, Ken Coates, Livio Maitan, Jean Dru; and the conferences at the Gramsci Institute and the CES.

² The 'historical' elements incorporated into the value of labour power—to use Marx's vocabulary—beyond the purely physiological ones, tend to increase, and thereby real wages, even when they are rising, may be falling further below this value.

cost of inflation, and the necessity to maintain a relatively stable international monetary system at the cost of periodic deflation; the more and more definite evolution towards a generalized recession in the Western world: all these tendencies inherent in the system are among the underlying causes of the explosion of May 1968. The effects of the 'stabilization plan', and the reappearance of widespread unemployment (particularly among young people) are sufficient indicators. To these could be added the effects of the structural crisis in certain sectors (the naval shipyards of Nantes and Saint-Nazaire are a glaring example) on the radicalization of the workers in certain regions.

It is also significant that the crisis of 1968 did not occur in a country with 'out-dated' structures, dominated by an archaic '*laissez-faire*', but, on the contrary, in the model-country of neo-capitalism—the country whose 'Plan' was referred to as the most 'successful' example of neo-capitalism, the country with the most dynamic nationalized sector, whose relative 'independence' with respect to the private sector even suggested to some commentators a definition of it as a 'State capitalist sector'. The inability neo-capitalism showed to curb its social contradictions in the long run thereby acquires an ever more universal importance.

The detonator role played by the student movement is a direct result of the inability of neo-capitalism at any level to satisfy the needs of the mass of young people attracted to the university either by the rise in the mean standard of living or by the need for a massive reproduction of more and more skilled labour, as a result of the third industrial revolution. This inability was revealed at the level of the material infrastructure (buildings, laboratories, lodgings, restaurants, grants, pre-salaries); at the level of the authoritarian structure of the university; at the level of the content of university education; at the level of the 'orientation' of employment outlets for graduates and for those whom the system obliges to interrupt their university studies before they are completed. The crisis in the bourgeois university, which is the immediate cause of the explosion of May 1968, must be seen as an aspect of the crisis of neo-capitalism and bourgeois society as a whole.

Finally, the increasing rigidity of the system which largely contributed to the exacerbation of the socio-economic contradictions—precisely in so far as it curbed them for a relatively long period—is itself directly linked to the evolution of the neo-capitalist economy.³ We have often emphasized that the tendencies to economic planning, to the 'globalization' of economic problems and social demands, are not merely the result of the specific plans of this or that fraction of the bourgeoisie, but derive from needs inherent in the capitalist economy in our time. The acceleration of technological innovation and the reduction in the cycle of fixed capital oblige the big bourgeoisie to calculate more and more precisely, and several years in advance, the depreciations and the invest-

³ The suppression of the mediations between the authorities and the people induced by the advent of Gaullism is often cited as one of the root causes of the May explosion. Beyond the peculiarly French phenomenon, we should look for general characteristics typical of neo-capitalism as such.

ments to be made by self-financing. He who says planned depreciation and investments says planned costs, including therefore 'labour costs'. This is the ultimate source of the 'incomes policy', of the '*economia convertita*' and of the other devices that tend simply to suppress the possibility for 'normal' industrial action to change the division of the national income desired by Big Capital.

But this increasing paralysis of traditional trade unionism suppresses neither the action of the laws of the market, nor the increasing discontent of the masses. In the long run, it tends to make workers' struggles more explosive, as the proletariat strives to win back in a few weeks what it feels it has lost over long years. Strikes, even and above all if they become less frequent, tend to become more violent and, increasingly, to start as wild-cat strikes.⁴ Big Capital's only way to avoid this evolution, which seriously threatens it, is to pass squarely from a strong State to an open dictatorship, as in Greece and Spain. But even in this eventuality—impossible unless the working masses are seriously defeated and demoralized *first*—a stronger curb on the socio-economic contradictions cannot in the long run but reproduce even more explosive and threatening situations for capitalism, as the recent evolution of Spain shows.

2. Typology of Revolution in Imperialist Countries

To discover whether a socialist revolution is possible in Western Europe, despite all the 'gains' of neo-capitalism and 'mass consumption society', both right-wing and 'left-wing' critics used usually to refer to the models of 1918 (the German Revolution) or of 1944-45 (the victorious Yugoslav revolution; the French and Italian revolutions, abortive in conditions analogous to those of 1918 in Germany), or even to guerrilla action. For the former, in the definitive absence of an economic or military catastrophe, it would be perfectly utopian to expect anything but reformist reactions from the proletariat; for the latter, the possibility of new revolutionary explosions of the workers was linked to the certain reappearance of crises of a catastrophic type. In other words, for the former the revolution had definitively become impossible; for the latter, it was relegated to the—largely mythical—moment of a 'new 1929'.

Since the beginning of the 1960's, I have tried to react to these schematic theses by referring to a different type of revolution, possible and probable in Western Europe. I hope I shall be allowed to remind the reader of what I wrote to this effect at the beginning of 1965:

'I have shown above how neo-capitalism does not in fact put an end to the causes of workers' discontent and that it is still quite possible to launch powerful campaigns—perhaps even inevitable. But can these campaigns take on a revolutionary complexion, in the context of a welfare society? Or are they necessarily restricted to reformist objec-

⁴ This was even confirmed in Western Germany in 1967, a year marked by an exceptional rise in the number of wild-cat strikes. The most important 'official' strike of that year, the Hesse rubber workers' strike, began as a wild-cat strike.

tives, as long as they take place in an atmosphere of more or less general prosperity?

'Before replying to this objection, we must first look at it more closely. If the objection means nothing more than that, in the present economic atmosphere, there are going to be no repetitions of the 1918 German revolution or the 1941-45 Yugoslav revolution, then it is quite simply a truism. We have already admitted this truism and included it in our prior hypothesis. And that brings us to the real point: are these particular kinds of revolution the only ones which can achieve the overthrow of capitalism? Are "catastrophic" conditions necessary? No. There is a different historic model which we can refer to: that of the general strike of June 1936 in France (and, to a lesser extent, the Belgian general strike of 1960-61, which came near to creating an analogous situation to that of 1936).

'It is perfectly possible that in the present general economic climate—that of "neo-capitalist affluence" or the "mass consumption society"—the workers will become more and more radicalized as the result of a whole series of social, political, economic or even military crises (incomes policy, wage-freezes; anti-union measures, authoritarianism; recessions, sudden monetary crises; protest movements against imperialist aggression, imperialist military alliances, the use of tactical nuclear weapons in so-called wars, etc.), and that, once they are radicalized, they will launch more and more far-reaching campaigns during the course of which they will begin to link their immediate demands with a programme of anti-capitalist structural reforms, until eventually the struggle concludes with a general strike which either overthrows the regime or creates a duality of powers.'

I apologize for this long quotation. At any rate, it shows that the type of revolutionary crisis which burst out in May 1968 was broadly predictable, and should not have been regarded as at all improbable or exceptional; it also shows that Socialist and Communist organizations could perfectly well have prepared for this type of revolution years ago if their leaders had wanted to, and had understood the basic contradictions of neo-capitalism.

This type of explosion was all the more foreseeable in that we have had two foretastes of it: December 1961-January 1962 in Belgium; June-July 1965 in Greece. After the events of May 1968 there can be no more doubt that this will be the form taken by possible revolutionary crises in the West (assuming there is no radical change in the economic situation or a world war): a mass strike going beyond the 'normal' aims and institutional framework of the capitalist State and society.

In respect to the debate that has taken place in the international socialist movement concerning the broad lines of an anti-capitalist strategy in Europe, the events of May 1968 suggest several complementary details

⁵ Ernest Mandel: 'A Socialist Strategy for Western Europe', *International Socialist Journal*, no. 10, pp. 440-441.

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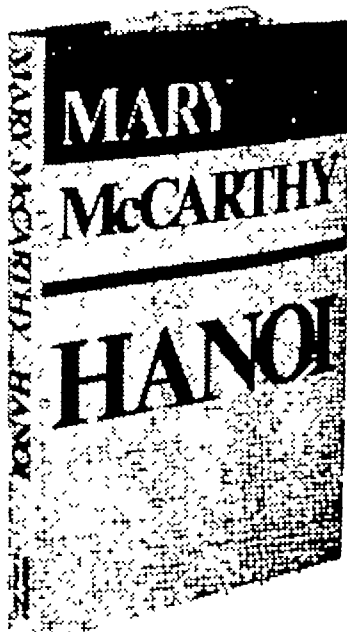
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to complete the rough typology of the socialist revolution in Western Europe that we began in 1965.

First, when the long-curbed contradictions of neo-capitalism break out into mass actions of an explosive character, the mass or general strike tends to transcend the form of a 'peaceful strike proceeding in perfect calm' and to combine various forms of action. Among these, factory occupation, the appearance of larger and harder pickets, immediate response to any repressive violence, street demonstrations which are transformed into skirmishes with the repressive forces, and even the erection of barricades, deserve special mention.

To conceal the *spontaneous and inevitable* origins of this radicalization of the forms of action, and to give credence to the odious thesis of 'left-wing provocateurs' conspiring to create 'violent incidents' in the interests of Gaullism,⁶ the reformists and neo-reformists of every colour are obliged to ignore the fact that comparable demonstrations already occurred during the Belgian general strike of 1960-61 (street barricades in Hainaut, the attack on the Guillemins station at Liège); that young workers went over to action of this sort massively during the strikes in Mans, Caen, Mulhouse, Besançon and elsewhere in France in 1967; that the radicalization of the young workers has been accompanied by the re-emergence of analogous forms of action in Italy (Trieste, Turin) and even in Western Germany. In other words, short of espousing Pompidou's ridiculous thesis of an 'international conspiracy', we must recognize that the turn taken by mass struggle is a spontaneous one caused by objective factors that we have to uncover, instead of blaming the petit-bourgeois character of the students, the 'political immaturity' of the young, or the role of the legendary provocateurs.

Now it is not hard to understand why every radicalization of the class struggle should rapidly lead to a violent confrontation with the repressive forces. For two decades, we have seen a continuous reinforcement of the repressive apparatus and the various legal devices that hinder strike action and workers' demonstrations in Western Europe. If in a 'normal' period the workers cannot rebel against these repressive devices, this is no longer true during a mass strike, which makes them abruptly conscious of the immense power their collective action conceals. Abruptly and spontaneously, they realize that the existing 'order' is a bourgeois order that tends to stifle the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. They become conscious of the fact that this struggle

⁶ In his report to the Central Committee of the PCF, July 8th-9th 1968 (*L'Humanité*, July 10th 1968), Waldeck-Rochet claims that 'our second task is the defence of democratic freedoms against the authoritarian and fascist tendencies which are growing stronger'. How was it, then, that the PCF had nothing to say in protest at the banning of extreme left-wing organizations, and that it even offered the government its pretext for this ban by talking openly in front of the authorities of 'Gelamar's armed militia'? But the history of the democratic working-class movement confirms that a repression tolerated when it is directed at the extreme left steadily spreads to all the left. In Nazi concentration camps, the German Social-Democratic leaders had an opportunity to meditate upon the political wisdom of accepting anti-Communist measures on the pretext that the fascist repression was 'objectively' provoked by 'Communist violence'.

cannot go beyond a certain level without increasingly running foul of the 'guardians' of that 'order'; and that this struggle for emancipation will be eternally vain if the workers continue to respect the rules of the game invented by their enemies to strangle their revolt.

The fact that only a minority of young workers were protagonists of these forms of struggle, so long as they remained embryonic; the fact that it was young workers who were stirred most to an instinctive identification by the students' barricades; the fact that at Flins and Peugeot/Sochaux, it was also always the young workers who responded most decisively to the provocations of the repressive forces—these facts do not weaken the above analysis at all. In every revolutionary wave it is always a relatively small minority which tries out new forms of radicalized action. Instead of sneering at the 'anarchist theory of active minorities', the leaders of the PCF would do better to read what Lenin has to say on this very subject.⁷ Besides, the failures and disappointments of the past and the ideological deformation that results from ceaseless propaganda in favour of the 'peaceful and parliamentary road' weigh less heavily precisely on the younger generation than they do on their elders.

The events of May 1968 also show that the idea of a long period of dual power, the idea of a gradual conquest and institutionalization of workers' control or of any anti-capitalist structural reforms, depends on an illusory conception of the exacerbated class struggle in a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary period.

The bourgeoisie's power will never be shaken by a succession of small conquests; if there is not an abrupt and brutal change in the balance of forces, Capital finds, and always will, the means to integrate them into the working of the system. And once there is a radical change in the balance of forces, the movement of the masses spontaneously tends towards a fundamental shaking of bourgeois power. Dual power reflects a situation in which the conquest of power is already objectively possible, as a result of the weakening of the bourgeoisie, but where only the lack of political preparation of the masses, and the preponderance of reformist and semi-reformist tendencies among them, temporarily halts their action at an intermediate stage.

In this respect May 1968 confirms the law of all revolutions—i.e. that when such large forces are involved, when the stake is so great, when the slightest error or the slightest daring initiative from either side can radically change the trend of events in the space of a few hours, then it is quite illusory to hope to 'freeze' this extremely unstable equilibrium for several years. The bourgeoisie is obliged to try almost in-

⁷ 'The principal forms of the December movement in Moscow were the peaceful strike and demonstrations, and these were the only form of struggle in which the vast majority of the workers took an active part. Yet the December strike in Moscow vividly demonstrated that the general strike, as an independent and predominant form of struggle, is out of date, that the movement is breaking out of these narrow bounds with elemental and irresistible force and giving rise to the highest form of struggle—an uprising' (Lenin: 'Lessons of the Moscow Uprising', *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, Moscow 1960, Vol. I, p. 608).

stantaneously to win back whatever the masses seize from it in the domain of power. The masses, if they do not give way to their adversary, are obliged almost instantaneously to enlarge their conquests. It has been this way in all revolutions; it will still be this way in the future.⁸

3. The Central Strategic Problem

All the weakness, all the impotence of the traditional organizations of the working-class movement faced with the problems posed by possible revolutionary upsurges in Western Europe, is shown by the way in which Waldeck-Rochet, the secretary-general of the PCF, formulates the dilemma in which, according to him, the French proletariat was imprisoned in May 1968:

In reality, the choice to be made in May was the following:

—Either to act in such a way that the strike would permit the essential demands of the workers to be satisfied, and to pursue at the same time, on the political plane, a policy aimed at making necessary democratic changes by constitutional means. This was our Party's position.

—Or else quite simply to provoke a trial of strength, in other words move towards an insurrection: this would include a recourse to armed struggle aimed at overthrowing the régime by force. This was the adventurist position of certain ultra-left groups.

But since the military and repressive forces were on the side of the established authorities,⁹ and since the immense mass of the people was totally hostile to such an adventure, it is clear that to take such a course meant quite simply to lead the workers to the slaughterhouse, and to wish for the crushing of the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party.

⁸ From the beginning of the factory occupations, the repressive forces tried to recover a number of strategic points occupied by the strikers, such as the telecommunications centre. A workers' movement which was not caught off its guard could have defended these key positions that it had taken without a blow, and used the authorities' provocation so that the masses progressively came to accept the idea of defensively armed strike pickets. The 'fear of civil war' would have been replaced by a desire for self-defence.

⁹ The reader will appreciate the value of this argument. No doubt the kind of 'peaceful revolution' the PCF leadership expects is a revolution in which 'the military and repressive forces' will have evaporated as if by magic, unless . . . they have gone over to the people's side. We are impatiently waiting for Waldeck-Rochet to reveal to us the secret of this miraculous trans-substantiation of a repressive force into nothing or into an 'arm of the people', without a prior struggle to disintegrate this army, which would have to employ revolutionary means. Cf. Lenin: 'It is alleged that there is no possibility of fighting modern troops; the troops must become revolutionary. Of course, unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle. That we must work among the troops goes without saying. But we must not imagine that they will come over to our side at one stroke, as a result of persuasion or their own convictions. The Moscow uprising clearly demonstrated how stereotyped and lifeless this view is. As a matter of fact, the wavering of the troops, which is inevitable in every truly popular movement, leads to a real fight for the troops whenever the revolutionary struggle becomes acute. The Moscow uprising was precisely an example of the desperate, frantic struggle for the troops that takes place between the reaction and the revolution' (*op. cit.*, p. 611).

'Well, we didn't fall into the trap. For that was the real plan of the Gaullist régime.

Indeed, their calculations were simple: faced with a crisis which they had themselves provoked by their anti-social and anti-democratic policies, they reckoned on taking advantage of that crisis in order to strike a decisive and lasting blow at the working-class, at our Party, and at any democratic movement.¹⁰

In other terms: either one had to limit the objectives of the general strike of ten million workers¹¹ to immediate demands, i.e. to just a fraction of the minimum programme; or else one had to hurl one's forces at once into an armed insurrection for the revolutionary conquest of power. It was one or the other, the minimum or the maximum. Since one was not prepared for an immediate insurrection, it was necessary to turn in the direction of a new set of Matignon agreements. One might as well conclude that, since one will *never* be ready for an immediate insurrection at the beginning of a general strike—above all if one continues to inculcate in the masses and one's own party a 'respect for legality'—one will *never* engage in struggles other than those which are *axed* round immediate demands.

Is it possible to conceive of an attitude further removed from Marxism, not to speak of Leninism?

When the bourgeois régime is stable and strong, it would be absurd to hurl one's forces into a revolutionary action aimed at the immediate overthrow of Capital; by doing this one would plunge to certain defeat. But how will one move from this strong and stable régime towards a régime which is weakened, shaken, disintegrating? By some miraculous leap? Does not a radical modification of the balance of forces necessitate decisive, staggering blows? Do not such blows open up a *process* of progressive weakening of the bourgeoisie? Is it not the elementary duty of a party which claims to be that of the working class—and even of the socialist revolution—to push this process to its furthest extent? Can this be done if one excludes automatically all struggles other than those for immediate demands . . . for as long as the situation is not ripe for an immediate armed insurrection, with victory fully guaranteed?

Does not a strike of ten million workers, with the factories occupied, represent a considerable weakening of the power of Capital? Should one not concentrate all one's efforts on an attempt to enlarge the breach, to gain a hold over the enemy, to make sure that Capital will no

¹⁰ *L'Hémisphère*, July 10th 1968.

¹¹ It is significant in this respect that the leadership of the CGT never declared a general strike, contenting itself with the statement that the general strike 'was a fact'. In reality, the declaration of a general strike implied the formulation of aims that went beyond those of an industrial struggle, and implied (in the Leninist Tradition) that they recognised that the question of power had been posed. In Belgium in 1960-61, confronted with a much less solid strike than in France in May 1968, and without factory occupations, the CP criticized the Social-Democratic union leadership because the latter did not call a general strike. In Belgium, though, the CP is only a fairly small minority inside the union movement . . .

longer be able rapidly to re-establish a balance of forces which favours it? Is there any means of achieving this other than by wrenching real power from the hands of Capital, power in the factory, power on the streets—i.e. by moving from a struggle for immediate economic demands to a struggle for anti-capitalist structural reforms, for transitional demands? If one refrains deliberately from struggling for such objectives; if one confines oneself deliberately to a struggle for immediate demands, does one not create all the conditions propitious for the re-establishment of a balance of forces favouring the bourgeoisie, for a new and sudden reversal of trends? The entire history of capitalism bears witness to the latter's capacity to give way on material demands when its power is threatened. It knows only too well if it can preserve its power it will be able in part to take back what it has given (by increased prices, taxes, unemployment, etc.) and in part to digest it through an increase in productivity. Besides, any bourgeoisie which has been scared by an exceptional strike, but which has been left in possession of its State power, will tend to go over immediately to a counter-offensive and to repression, as soon as the mass movement starts to ebb. The history of the working-class movement goes to demonstrate it: a party enclosed in Waldeck-Rochet's dilemma will never make the revolution, and will inevitably be defeated.¹²

By refusing to *involve themselves in the process* which leads from the struggle for immediate demands towards the struggle for power, via the struggle for transitional demands and the creation of organs of dual power, reformists and neo-reformists have always condemned themselves to considering any revolutionary action as a 'provocation' which weakens the masses and 'strengthens reaction'. This was the refrain of German social democracy in 1919, in 1920, in 1923, in 1931-33. It was the fault of 'leftist adventurers, anarchists, putschists, spartacists, bolsheviks' (at the time trotskyists were not yet included) if the bourgeoisie had a majority in the Constituent Assembly of Weimar; for their 'violent actions' had frightened the people', moaned Scheidemann and company in 1919. It was the fault of the communists if Nazism had been able to gain strength; for the threat of revolution pushed over the middle classes into the camp of counter-revolution, they repeated in 1930-33.

It is significant that even the Kautsky of 1918 still understood that, faced with powerful mass strikes, the working-class movement could

¹² Waldeck-Rochet also claims that 'A condition for the success of the peaceful road is that the working class, thanks to a correct political alliance, succeeds in gathering together in the struggle for socialism such a superiority of forces that the isolated big bourgeoisie is no longer in a position to turn to civil war against the people'. The whole of reformist cretinism is displayed in these words: the 'superiority of forces' is no longer measured by the level of mobilization, the initiative, the daring or the energy of the proletariat, but exclusively by the disappearance of the opponent's will to resist. So long as the bourgeoisie is capable of 'turning to civil war', it is better to keep down! With this kind of spirit neither the Russian, the Yugoslav nor the Chinese revolution, not to speak of the Cuban or the Vietnamese revolution, would ever have been started. It should be added that such feebleness of spirit is the best way to encourage the bourgeoisie to launch its civil war on its own. Social-Democracy kept down when Hitler threatened it, on the strength of similar arguments; in Greece, the same mentality allowed the colonels to take power without meeting any serious resistance.

not limit itself to traditional forms of action and organization (trade unions and elections), but had to pass over to higher forms of organization, i.e. to the setting up of committees elected by the workers, of a Soviet type. Lenin nevertheless castigated the hesitations, the contradictions and the eclecticism of the Kautsky of 1918. What lengths would he have gone to in opposition to Waldeck-Rochet's line of argument, which runs: since we are not ready at once to organize a victorious armed insurrection, it is better not to alarm the bourgeoisie and to limit ourselves to wage increases and to elections—this at the moment in which France experiences the largest strike in its history, in which the workers are occupying the factories, in which the police federation announces that it will no longer be used for repressive purposes, in which the Bank of France can no longer print banknotes for lack of workers ready to work, in which—most certain sign of the instability of bourgeois power—strata as peripheral as architects, professional cyclists, junior hospital staff, and notaries start 'contesting' the régime?

Discussion about a 'power vacuum', posed in so abstract a way, is clearly quite fruitless. But Waldeck-Rochet, who takes over the Gaullist thesis of a 'plot' (in his version, it is the Gaullists who are its authors!), and who thus replaces an analysis of the class struggle by a recourse to demonology, should remember that the same régime which, according to him, wished at all costs to lure the working class into the 'trap' of a 'trial of strength', fell over itself in its haste to meet the union leaders and negotiate the end of the strike in exchange for very substantial material concessions.

If the Gaullist aim had really been that of 'provoking a trial of strength', their course of action was quite clear: to refuse any dialogue with the unions as long as the factories were occupied. The trial of strength would have been inevitable within the space of a few weeks. However, the Gaullist régime of course avoided any such madness, and it had good reason to! Its estimate of the balance of forces, *and of the latter's constant deterioration from the point of view of the bourgeoisie*, was more accurate than that which Waldeck-Rochet presents today. In other words, the régime was seeking not a trial of strength, but the end of the strike, as quickly as possible, and at almost any price. In other words, the whole thesis of the 'trap' is nothing but a myth whose aim is to distract attention from the real problems.¹⁵ Moreover, if there existed any 'plan' of de

¹⁵ When De Gaulle reversed the situation on May 30th, because the leaders of the workers' movement accepted the withdrawal to the 'parliamentary road', he could obviously increase the pressure of the repressive forces. But even then, the cases of Flins and Sochaux show the possibilities of the workers' response. The 'spectre of civil war' is used by the régime as it is by the leadership of the PCF to conceal the real situation and its possibilities; the possible impetus of a policy of popular self-defence, against repressive forces exhausted by their ceaseless struggles with the students, which began to spread to an increasing number of cities; the régime's hesitation to mobilize the army stationed in France (confined to barracks during the decisive weeks); the possibility of transforming several hundred firms into bastions of resistance against the gas and protection for the demonstrators. These are the facts of the case. In these concrete contradictions, what possibilities and aims could an intervention by the *paris* have had, in the middle of a general strike and faced with a proletariat holding the supreme surety in its hands: the country's whole productive apparatus? The experience of July 1936 in Spain, when an army intervention was

Gaulle's, that of May 30th was crystal clear: stop the strikes as quickly as possible, then move on to elections. What was the reaction of the PCF leaders? Did they not run headlong into this 'trap,' to the extent even of reproaching the strikers with 'helping the régime to avoid elections'? And what was the result?

This is why all the casuistry deployed around the question of whether there was really a power vacuum in May, and whether de Gaulle ever 'made clear his intention of withdrawing and abandoning the field', belongs to the same methods of thinking which substitute allusions to plots, subterfuges, and 'provocateurs' for any serious analysis of the social forces present and of the dynamic of the interplay of relations between them.

The 'power vacuum' is not a gift bestowed ready-made by history; to await it passively, or with the aid of electoral campaigns, means to resign oneself to never experiencing it. The 'power vacuum' is only the culminating point in a whole process of deterioration of the balance of forces as far as the dominant class is concerned. Even Kerensky did not show any 'intention of withdrawing and abandoning the field', a few hours before the October insurrection. The essential is not to engage in scholastic debates about the definition of a real 'power vacuum': the essential is to intervene in the mass struggle in such a way as to accelerate continually that deterioration of the balance of forces from the point of view of Capital. Apart from a strategy aimed at wresting real powers from the bourgeoisie, tireless propaganda in favour of revolution, even if the conditions are not yet 'completely' ripe, is a necessary condition of its success.¹⁴

The central strategic problem is therefore precisely that of exploding the dilemma 'either purely economist strikes and elections (i.e. business as usual); or immediate armed insurrection, and with the proviso that all the conditions of victory are guaranteed in advance.' It must be understood that general strikes like those of December 1960-January 1961 in Belgium and that of May 1968—above all if new forms of radical mass combat appear in connection with them—can and must lead to more than wage increases, even if the preparations for an armed insurrection are by no means complete. They can and must result in the conquest by the masses of new real powers, powers of control and of veto which create a duality of power, raise the class struggle to its highest and bitterest level, and thus bring the conditions for a revolutionary seizure of power to maturity.

broken in a few days in practically all proletarian centres by determined workers, is rich in lessons. France in 1968 is far from containing the backward regions, acting as base areas for fascism, that Spain still contained in 1936: the Europe of 1968 has nothing in common with the Europe of 1936. The French middle classes are hardly ready to accept a bloody dictatorship. Is it possible that De Gaulle did not make all these calculations, or that he would have dared to formulate the threats he did if he had not been convinced that his opponents would retreat rather than take up the challenge?

¹⁴ 'Kautsky does not display a shadow of an understanding of the truth that a revolutionary Marxist differs from the ordinary philistine and petty bourgeois by his ability to *preach* to the uneducated people that the maturing revolution is necessary, to *prove* that it is inevitable, to *explain* its benefits to the people, and to *prepare* the proletariat and all the working and exploited people for it' (Lenin: 'The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky', *Selected Works*, Vol. III, p. 130).

4. Spontaneity of the Masses, Duality of Power and Revolutionary Organization

It may be accepted that the students really had revolutionary intentions in May 1968; but surely the immense majority of workers limited themselves to accepting the economist character which the union leaders gave to the strike? Thus M. Duverger, Jean Dru and others chimed in behind the PCF's analysis.

It is very hard to know what the mass of workers were really thinking during the days of May; they have not in fact been asked to speak for themselves. However it would have been easy to discover their pre-occupations, if there had been any real desire to know them. It would only have been necessary to call the workers in each firm together in a general assembly, to call upon them to make their opinions amply known, to decide that the factories should be occupied by the entire mass of workers, to see to it that the widest possible form of workers' democracy reigned within them, and to call meetings between the different factories at every turning-point of the strike: in brief, to create within the context of that general strike the type of elected strike committee with delegates revocable at any moment, and the type of permanent contestation and debate beneath the critical eye of the masses, represented by the soviets—advocated for such strikes not merely by Lenin, Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg, but even by the Kautsky of 1918. The official leaders of the French working-class movement fall far short even of that Kautsky.¹⁵

The union leaders strove to avoid such mass occupations and such confrontations of ideas at all costs; they sought by every means to deny the revolutionary spokesmen of the students access to the factories. This shows that they were not so sure of the workers' reactions. The fact that the workers, bought together to ratify the 'Grenelle agreement', in fact rejected it by overwhelming majorities constitutes another index of the masses' instinctive will to transcend the phase of a movement purely concerned with immediate demands.

Moreover, one may well ask: if all that the workers wanted was really a large wage increase, why did they spontaneously embark upon the occupation of the factories? The French workers have been involved in numerous actions for wage increases in the last twenty years. These movements have never attained a comparable scale to that of May 1968; the forms of action have never approached those of May 1968. By occupying the factories, by turning out into the streets in their tens—and sometimes hundreds—of thousands, by hoisting the red flag over their workplaces, by spreading everywhere such slogans as: 'Ten Years is Enough'; 'The Factories to the Workers'; 'Workers' Power'; 'Power to the Working Class', the mass of strikers expressed aspirations

¹⁵ Lenin quotes Kautsky, who wrote: 'It appears that everywhere the old methods of the economic and political struggle of the proletariat are inadequate against the gigantic economic and political forces which finance capital has at its disposal. . . . Thus, the Soviet organization is one of the most important phenomena of our time. It promises to acquire decisive importance in the great decisive battles between capital and labour towards which we are marching' (Ibid., p. 101).

which went far beyond purely economic demands.¹⁶

But there is a far more convincing proof still of the fact that the workers too wanted to go beyond a simple routine campaign 'for wages and good elections'. This proof is their conduct wherever they had the opportunity of expressing themselves freely, wherever the bureaucratic screen had been shaken or had given way, wherever mass occupations had taken place in the factories, wherever initiatives were able to develop from the base up. Nothing like a complete inventory of such experiences as yet exists; but the list is already an impressive one:

—at the CSR factory in Brest, the workers decided to carry on production, but they produced what they themselves considered important, notably walkie-talkies to help the strikers and demonstrators to defend themselves against the forces of repression;

—at Nantes, the strike committee tried to control traffic to and from the town; they distributed permits for the use of vehicles, and blocked the entrances to the town with barricades. It also appears that the same committee even issued credit-tokens which were accepted as currency by certain shopkeepers and farmers;

—at Caen, the strike committee forbade all access to the town for 24 hours;

—at the Rhône-Poulenc factories, at Vitry, the strikers decided to establish relations of direct exchange with the farmers, sought to extend this experiment to other firms, and discussed the transition to an 'active strike' (i.e. to a return to work, but work for themselves, according to their own plans)—though they came to the conclusion that it would be better to postpone this last experiment until such time as several other firms were ready to follow their example;¹⁷

—at the Mureaux Cement Works, the workers voted in a general assembly to remove the manager. They refused to accept the employers' proposal for a new vote. The manager in question was thereupon sent off to a different branch of the same Cement Works, where, out of solidarity with the lads from Mureaux, the workers immediately came out on strike—for the first time in the history of the factory;

—at the Wonder Batteries factory, at Saint-Ouen, the strikers elected a strike committee, and, in order to show their disapproval for the reformist line of the CGT, they barricaded themselves inside the factory and refused to let the union officials in;

—at Saclay, the workers of the nuclear energy centre requisitioned materials from the factory in order to carry on the strike;

—at the Rouen naval yards, the workers took young people selling revolutionary literature under their protection, and prevented the CRS who were following and trying to arrest them from entering the factory;

¹⁶ I refer the reader to Lenin once again: 'What a stain on Social-Democracy will be left by this talk about conspiracy in connection with such a *people's* movement as the December struggle in Moscow!' ('Report on the Unity Congress of the RSDLP', June 1906, *Collected Works*, Moscow 1962, Vol. X, p. 367).

¹⁷ Note that the same workers spontaneously made contact with various chemical works in Western Europe, showing more initiative and a more 'European consciousness' than all the union leaderships put together. The firm whose congress was in session during the May events expressed no higher level of solidity than to vote \$10,000 to support the strikers (0.1 cent per striker).

- in several Paris printing works, the workers either insisted on changes in a headline ('Le Figaro') or refused to print a newspaper ('La Nation'), when the content was directly damaging to the strike;
- in the Peugeot plant at Sochaux, the workers built barricades against any intrusion by the CRS, and chased the latter victoriously out of the factory;
- in Paris, the CLEOP (student-worker-peasant liaison committee) organized food convoys supplied by agricultural co-operatives; these distributed produce directly to the factories, or sold it at cost price (e.g. chickens for 80 centimes a kilo, eggs for 11 centimes each);
- at the Citroën factories, in Paris, a first modest and embryonic attempt was made to requisition lorries for the purpose of supplying the strikers;¹⁸
- perhaps the most eloquent case of all: in the Atlantic Yards at Saint-Nazaire, the workers occupied the plant and for ten days refused to submit a list of immediate demands, despite constant pressure from the union apparatus.

When this list is completed, how will it be possible to deny that it expresses the spontaneous tendency of the working class to take its destiny into its own hands, and to reorganize society in accordance with its convictions and its ideals? Are these the activities of a strike purely concerned with immediate economic demands, of a 'typical strike', or are they the activities of a strike whose extent and whose logic impelled the masses themselves to go beyond immediate demands?¹⁹

An argument against this analysis has been found in the result of the legislative elections and the Gaullist upsurge which this result reflects. But such arguments are strongly coloured by parliamentary cretinism, by feigned ignorance of what elections represent in *bourgeois* democracy.

On the first round, the Left obtained 41 % of the votes and the Gaullists 44 %. But if account is taken of the large number of workers who abstained on this occasion out of disgust for the politics of the big working-class organizations, but who nevertheless remain available for working-class action; if account is taken of the hundreds of thousands of young people who were in the vanguard of the May 1968 movement but who remain deprived of the right to vote by an anti-democratic electoral system, including 300,000 who—although over 21 years old—could not vote because the régime refused to allow the electoral roll to be brought up to date; then one may presume without exaggeration that even after the immense disappointment of May 30th, the forces of

¹⁸ For the source of this information see particularly *Le Monde*, May 29th 1968; *Le Figaro*, May 30th 1968; *La Nouvelle Avant-Garde*, June 1968; *Nouvel Observateur*, June 19th 1968 and July 1968; 'Mai 1968, première phase de la révolution socialiste française', special number of *Quatrième Internationale*, May-June 1968, etc., etc.

¹⁹ Waldeck-Rochet quotes Lenin: 'To say that every strike is a step towards the socialist revolution is an absolutely empty phrase'. The enormity of this sophism is staggering. Does Waldeck-Rochet mean to insinuate that Lenin wrote: 'To say that a strike of ten million workers with factory occupations is a step towards the socialist revolution is an absolutely empty phrase'? The same Lenin who wrote that 'a general strike poses the question of power, the question of an uprising'?

the Left and those of Gaullism were evenly balanced among the French people.

Moreover, that balance came after a successful manoeuvre on the part of the Gaullist régime, and after a lamentable tactical defeat for the Left, which had accepted the rules of the game as laid down by the class enemy: i.e. to stop the strike on a basis consisting purely of economic demands; to accept *de facto* repression against the extreme left; to look to the elections for a solution to the vital questions raised by May 1968. Can it be doubted for an instant that if the initiative had remained with the Left, and if the latter had been able to exploit the enormous capital of combativity, of enthusiasm and of generosity which had been accumulated during the four weeks of May in order to impose workers' control, democratically elected neighbourhood and factory committees federated and confederated at the national scale, armed strike pickets, printing works at the people's disposal, in addition to satisfaction of the immediate economic demands—can it be doubted that in this case the 45 % of the French nation which the Left represented despite everything on the evening of June 23rd would within the space of a few days have become 50 and more than 50 %?

For all contemporary history bears witness to the fact: if the 'fear of civil war' is a motive of political choice for the middle classes and the 'floating voters', nonetheless the tendency to move over to the strongest side, the temptation to jump onto a victorious bandwagon, the power of attraction of the side showing the most determined and energetic initiative, these factors weigh far more decisively in the balance.²⁰ In this sense, De Gaulle had won the battle by the evening of May 30th, far less by mustering round himself the 'party of fear' than by outsmarting his political adversaries—who were characterised by hesitation, lack of imagination, immobility, and the spirit of capitulation.

The objection has often been made to the strategy of anti-capitalist structural reforms, to the transitional programme strategy which I advocate, that it is only effective if applied by the great working-class organizations, both industrial and political, themselves. Without the protective barrier that only these organizations are capable of erecting against the permanent infiltration of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology into the working class, the latter, in this view, is at present

²⁰ "They (the representatives of the Second International and of the "Independent" Social-Democrats—E.M.) forget that, to a very large degree, the bourgeois parties are able to rule because they deceive the masses of the people, because of the yoke of capital, and to this is added self-deception concerning the nature of capitalism . . . "First let the majority of the population, while private property still exists, that is, while the rule and yoke of capital still exist, express themselves in favour of the proletariat, and only then can and should the party take power"—so say the petit-bourgeois democrats who call themselves socialist but who are in reality the servitors of the bourgeoisie. "Let the revolutionary proletariat first overthrow the bourgeoisie, break the yoke of capital, and smash the bourgeois State apparatus, then the victorious proletariat will be able rapidly to gain the sympathy and support of the majority of the non-proletarian working people by satisfying their needs at the expense of the exploiters"—say we" (Lenin: 'The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', *Collected Works*, Vol. XXX, pp. 272-273).

condemned to confine itself to struggles having immediate economic aims. The experience of May 1968 has totally invalidated this pessimistic diagnosis.

Certainly, the existence of mass unions and parties unintegrated into the capitalist régime, educating the workers ceaselessly in a spirit of defiance and of global contestation vis-à-vis that régime, would be a potent trump-card in accelerating the maturation of revolutionary class consciousness among the workers. This would be true even if those unions and parties were not adequate instruments for the conquest of power. But the experience of May 1968 has shown that in the absence of a mass revolutionary vanguard, the proletariat ends up by generating that class consciousness all the same, because it is nourished by all the practical experience of the contradictions of neo-capitalism which the workers accumulate daily, throughout the years.

Spontaneity is the embryonic form of organization, Lenin used to say.²¹ The experience of May 1968 permits one to verify the present relevance of this observation in two ways. Working-class spontaneity is never a pure spontaneity; the fermentation among the workers brought about by vanguard groups—sometimes by just one experienced revolutionary militant—is an operative factor: their tenacity and patience are rewarded precisely at such moments, when social fever attains its paroxysm. Working-class spontaneity leads to the organization of a larger vanguard, since in the space of a few weeks thousands of workers have understood the possibility of a socialist revolution in France. They have understood that they must organize to that end, and with a thousand threads they are weaving links with the students, with the intellectuals, with the vanguard revolutionary groups which little by little are giving shape to the future revolutionary mass party of the French proletariat, and of which the JCR already appears to be the most solid and most dynamic nucleus.

I am not a naïve admirer of working-class spontaneity pure and simple. Even if the latter necessarily acquires a new validity faced with the conservatism of the bureaucratic apparatuses²¹, it shows obvious limitations when confronted with a State apparatus and a highly specialized and centralized machinery of repression. Nowhere has the working class as yet spontaneously overthrown the capitalist régime and the bourgeois State nationally; it will doubtless never succeed in doing so. Even to extend organs of dual power over an entire country the size of France is, if not impossible, at least made far more difficult by the absence of a vanguard already sufficiently well implanted in the factories to be able swiftly to generalize the initiatives of the workers in a few pilot plants.

²¹ We cannot analyse here the material and social roots of the conservatism of the mass cps of France and Italy. These roots are in part identical with the roots of classical reformist Social-Democracy; in part they differ from them. One remark on the 'ideological' plane will suffice: it is impossible to educate and organize for more than two decades in the spirit of 'new democracy' and the 'peaceful road to socialism' without this organization being entirely at a loss and disarmed when it is confronted with a revolutionary drive of the broad masses, breaking the yoke of bourgeois 'legality' and parliamentarianism.

Furthermore, there is no advantage in exaggerating the scale of the spontaneous initiative of the working masses in May 1968. This initiative was everywhere *potentially* present; it only became a reality in a certain number of limited cases, whether on the level of decisions to occupy the factories or on that of the above-mentioned initiatives towards establishing a duality of power. The students, when in action, in their vast majority escaped all efforts to channel them in a reformist direction; the majority of the workers on the other hand once again allowed themselves to be so channelled. This should not be held against them. The responsibility lies at the door of the bureaucratic apparatuses who have striven for years to smother within themselves all critical spirit, every manifestation of opposition to the reformist and neo-reformist line, every residue of working-class democracy. The Gaullist political victory of June 1968 is the price which the working-class movement is paying for the fact that it has not yet reversed these relations between vanguard and mass within the French proletariat.

But if May 1968 has demonstrated once again the absence of an adequate revolutionary leadership, and the inevitable consequences for the success of the revolutionary upsurge which flow from this fact, the experience also makes it possible to glimpse—for the first time in the West for over thirty years—the real dimensions of the problem and the ways leading to a solution of it. What was lacking in May 1968, if a first decisive thrust towards dual power was to be made, if France (with all necessary qualifications) was to experience its February 1917, was a revolutionary organization no more numerous in the factories than it was in the universities. At that precise moment and at those particular points, small nuclei of articulate workers, armed with a correct political programme and analysis and able to make themselves understood, would have been enough to prevent the dispersal of the strikers, to impose mass occupation and the democratic election of strike committees in the principal factories of the country. Of course, this was not an insurrection or a seizure of power. But a decisive page in the history of France and Europe would already have been turned. All those who believe that socialism is possible and necessary should act so that it will be turned next time.

5. Participation, Self-Determination and Worker's Control

For a conquest of power, there must be a revolutionary vanguard that has already convinced the majority of wage-earners and salaried staff of the impossibility of reaching socialism by the parliamentary road, that is already capable of mobilizing the majority of the proletariat beneath its flag. If the PCF had been a revolutionary party—that is, if it had educated the workers in this spirit even in periods when revolution was not on the immediate agenda; even, as Lenin put it, in counter-revolutionary phases—then, in the abstract, such a seizure of power was possible in May 1968. But then many things would have been at least very different from the reality of May 1968.

As the PCF is not a revolutionary party, and as none of the vanguard groups as yet has at its disposal a sufficient audience in the working class,

May 1968 could not terminate in a seizure of power. But a general strike accompanied by factory occupations can and should terminate in the conquest of anti-capitalist structural reforms, in the realization of transitional demands—i.e. in the creation of a dual power, an empirical power of the masses opposed to the legal power of Capital. To realize such a dual power, a mass revolutionary party is not indispensable; all that is necessary is a powerful spontaneous thrust by the workers, stimulated, enriched and partially co-ordinated by an organized revolutionary vanguard which is still too weak to dispute the leadership of the workers' movement directly with the traditional organizations, but already strong enough to outflank it in practice.

This organizational vanguard is not yet a party; it is an emerging party, the nucleus of a future party. And if the problems of building this party can be broadly situated in a framework analogous to that suggested by Lenin in *What is to be Done?*, their solution must be enriched by sixty years of experience and the incorporation of all the particularities which today characterize the proletariat, students and other exploited classes of the imperialist countries.

Also, it is necessary to take into account the fact that historically this will be the third attempt—since the SFIO and the PCF have failed—and that past setbacks have instilled in workers and students a pronounced and justified suspicion of all attempts to manipulate them, of all schematic dogmatism, and all efforts to *substitute* objectives imposed from afar for those which the masses give themselves. On the other hand the capacity of militant revolutionaries to support and amplify all partial movements towards just objectives, and to demonstrate the best organization in these partial and sectional struggles, gives them (and their organizations) the authority necessary to integrate the masses into unified anti-capitalist action.

The mystifications of the Gaullist movement for 'participation' have been sufficiently denounced for us not to carry on about it here at any great length. As long as the principal means of production are in private hands, irregularity of investment will inevitably provoke cyclical fluctuations in economic activity, i.e. unemployment. As long as production is in essence production for profit, it will not principally be aimed at satisfying the needs of men but will be oriented towards those sectors which produce the greatest profit (even if they do so by the 'manipulation' of demand). As long as the capitalist and his manager keep their right of command over men and machines within the firm—and, from de Gaulle to Couve de Murville, all of the régime's representatives have made it quite clear that they never for one instant considered questioning *that* particular power!—the worker remains alienated in the process of production.

If one adds together these three characteristics of the capitalist régime, one obtains the image of a society in which the basic features of the proletarian condition remain. The insecurity of existence remains. The alienation of the producer remains; that of the consumer will even grow. As before, the sale of labour power will lead to the appearance of surplus value and to the accumulation of capital—the property of a

class other than that which produced it through its work.²² Participation within such a framework is really tantamount to an attempt to accentuate alienation by making the workers lose their consciousness of being exploited, without suppressing exploitation itself. The proletariat will have the right to be consulted about how many of them are to be fired. Happy is the chicken which can help to choose the methods by which it will be plucked!

However it is not sufficient to demystify the demagoguery of 'participation'. The phrase did not arise during the May crisis by chance. It is an expression of the regime's comprehension of how sharp the contradictions are in neo-capitalist France, a foreboding of their explosive character for an entire historical period. How otherwise can one explain why significant forces of Big Capital saw themselves obliged to utilize arguments which they never had to bring out even in 1936 or in 1944-45? There is a striking parallel between the German Social Democrats fighting the Spartacists and the workers' and soldiers' councils in January 1919 with the slogan 'Socialisation is under way', and de Gaulle seeking to dam the revolution from below and insinuating that he is getting ready to realise one from above—in a context of order and tranquillity, naturally.

The May explosion at one blow confronted the whole of French society with the social question of the epoch for the imperialist countries. Who will govern the machines? Who will decide investments, their orientation and their location? Who will determine the rhythm of work? Who will select the range of products to be made? Who will establish the priorities in the use of the productive forces at society's disposal? Despite the attempt to reduce the General Strike to a problem of payment for labour-power, economic and social realities oblige and will oblige everybody to discuss the fundamental problem, as formulated by Marx: 'Not merely increased wages, but the suppression of wage-labour'.

Revolutionary socialists can only rejoice. The turn of events has confirmed what they have proclaimed for many years; that the logic of the neo-capitalist economy and of the intensified class struggle will increasingly displace the centre of gravity of debate and of action away from problems of redistribution of national income towards those of maintaining or overthrowing capitalist structures—in the firm, in the economy and throughout bourgeois society.

During the May crisis, the slogan of 'self-management' was pronounced in various quarters. As a general propaganda slogan there was nothing wrong with it, on condition that it meant 'self-management for the workers' and not 'self-management for each firm', and on condition that

²² We need not insist on the fraudulence of the 'profit-sharing' which is the Gaullist variant of the 'popular capitalism' dear to the American and West German capitalist. It would only suppress the proletarian condition if it freed the worker from his economic obligation to sell his labour power, that is, if it allowed him to constitute for himself a fortune that would ensure him a livelihood. A 'capitalism' that arrived at this result would have negated itself, for it would have no more labourers to exploit in its factories.

it was made clear that it implied the introduction of democratic-centralist planning of investments with some supplementary guarantees; otherwise the 'deproletarianised producer' risks finding himself no better off than before—and one morning he may wake up unemployed.²³

However, outside of pre-insurrectionary situations in which the immediate overthrow of the capitalist system is posed, the slogan of 'self-management' as an objective for immediate action conceals a dangerous confusion—and especially when used in the way it sometimes was by the leaders of the CFDT. Self-management for the workers presupposes overthrowing the power of Capital—in the firms, in society, and in the sphere of political power. As long as this power continues to exist, it is not only utopian to wish to transfer the power of decision to the workers, factory by factory (as if the strategic decisions in contemporary capitalist economies were taken at that level and not at the level of the banks, trusts, monopolies and the State!). It is also reactionary utopianism, for if it happened to attain some initial institutional form, it would tend to transform workers' collectives into production co-operatives, obliged to take on capitalist firms in competition and to submit to the laws of the capitalist economy and to the imperatives of profit. Thus one would be brought back, by another route, to the same result that Gaullist 'participation' aims to achieve; that of taking the workers' awareness that they are exploited from them, without suppressing the essential causes of their exploitation.

The May events suggest the same answer as does a socio-economic analysis of neo-capitalism to the problem of an alternative to the capitalist framework of the firm and the whole economy. Thus this answer can neither be that of 'participation' (open class collaboration), nor that of 'self-management' (indirect integration into the capitalist economy), but must be that of *workers' control*. Workers' control is the exact equivalent for the workers of what global contestation represents for the students.

Workers' control is the affirmation by the workers of a refusal to let the management dispose freely of the means of production and labour power. The struggle for workers' control is the struggle for the right of representatives freely elected by the workers and revocable at any moment²⁴ to veto decisions as to hiring and firing, the speed of the production line, the introduction of new processes and the maintenance or suppression of all existing processes, and obviously the close-down of firms. It is a refusal to enter discussions with the management or the government as a whole on the division of the national income, so long

²³ The Yugoslav example shows that self-determination limited to the enterprise level and accompanied by an excessive growth of the market economy, on the pretext that the worker must be protected against 'centralization' (as if the authority of a national congress of workers' councils—soviets—permanently in session and scrupulously respecting workers' democracy, would not serve as an effective instrument in the struggle against bureaucracy), risks increasing social inequality, the power of the bureaucracy and disadvantages for the workers (including redundancies and massive unemployment).

²⁴ Several strike committees—notably those of the Galeries Lafayette and of the Rhône-Poulenc factories in the Paris region—were elected under a system in which the members were revocable at the discretion of their electors.

as the workers have not acquired the ability to reveal the way the capitalists cook the books when they talk of prices and profits. In other words, it is the opening of the management's account books, and the calculation of the real production costs and the real profit margins by the workers.

Workers' control should not be conceived as an established schema that the vanguard is trying to force onto the real development of the class struggle. The struggle for workers' control—with which the strategy of anti-capitalist structural reforms, the struggle for a transitional programme, is largely identified—must, on the contrary, keep close to the preoccupations of the masses, must constantly arise from the everyday reality experienced by the workers, their wives, the students and the revolutionary intellectuals.

Does the rise in wages exacted in May 1968 'necessarily' imply a rise in production costs? To what extent? Is the rise in retail prices really the result of this rise in wages?²⁵ Is the management trying to 'recover the losses caused by the strikes' when it speeds up production, in other words is it trying to re-establish its profit-rate by increasing relative surplus value? Who is responsible for the haemorrhage of exchange reserves suffered by France in the space of a few days? It cannot be the workers, or 'leftist groupuscules' who have transferred billions of francs to Switzerland and elsewhere. On the basis of such questions and analogous ones that arise out of everyday reality, the agitation for workers' control can be constantly amplified, actualized and perfected.

The aim is not to create new institutions within the framework of the capitalist régime. It is to raise the level of consciousness of the masses, their combativity, their ability to respond like lightning to each reactionary move by the management and the government, and to challenge the working of the capitalist régime not just in words but in action. Thus the revolutionary insolence of the masses will assert itself, their determination to dismiss capitalist 'order' and 'authority' and to create a higher order, tomorrow's socialist order, in a spirit of intransigent respect for workers' democracy.

May 1968 has the historical merit of demonstrating that the struggle for this kind of workers' control, the birth of dual power from the sub-soil of neocapitalist contradictions and from the creative initiative of the masses, is possible and necessary for all capitalist Europe²⁶. A later stage will see its expansion, i.e. will put onto the agenda the passage towards socialism, towards man's escape from alienation. It is only a beginning. The struggle will go on. *July 20th 1968.*

²⁵ The US economist J. K. Galbraith, who is no Marxist, remarks that the American steel trusts usually defer previously decided price rises until after a strike, so that they can then shift the responsibility onto 'excessive wage increases.'

²⁶ I have not enough space here to discuss the implications and consequences of the explosion of 1968 on the international plane—in Europe and beyond. However, I should like to stress the unanimity with which international capital flew to the support of De Gaulle in the decisive days, and despite all the friction that divided him from the Anglo-Saxons. Contrast this with the lamentable spectacle of the total inability of the official trade-union and workers' movement to organize a single action in solidarity with the largest general strike the West has seen for decades.

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V. I. Lenin

The Student Movement and the Present Political Situation

A students' strike has been called at St. Petersburg University.¹ A number of other higher educational establishments have joined in. The movement has already spread to Moscow and Kharkov. Judging from all the reports in the foreign and Russian newspapers and in private letters from Russia, we are faced with a fairly broad *academic* movement.

Back to the old days! Back to pre-revolutionary Russia! That is what these events signify above all. As before, official reaction is tightening the screw in the universities. The eternal struggle in autocratic Russia against the student organizations has taken the form of a crusade by the Black-Hundred Minister Schwartz—acting in full agreement with 'Premier' Stolypin—against the autonomy which was promised the students in the autumn of 1905 (what did not the autocracy, faced with the onset of the revolutionary working class, 'promise' Russian citizens at that time!); against an autonomy which the students enjoyed so long as the autocracy had 'other things to think of than students', and which the autocracy, if it was to remain such, could not but begin to take away.

As before, the liberal press laments and groans, this time together with some Octobrists—the professors lament and snivel too, imploring the

¹ Lenin wrote this article in reply to a letter from one of the leaders of the student movement in 1908. The student movement was directed against the reactionary policy pursued by the Minister of Education Schwartz who set out to crush university autonomy and annul all the liberties won by the students in 1905.

The movement was led by the joint students' councils in which Social-Democratic students played an important role. But quite often the councils ignored the mood of the students and tried to clamp down on their demands. Thus, the general students' meeting at the St. Petersburg University on September 13th, 1908, passed a resolution which urged the students to protest against the government policy in regard to the higher school and proposed to call an all-Russian strike (extracts from the resolution and Lenin's article were published in the same issue of *Pravda*). However the St. Petersburg Joint Council quashed the resolution and instead addressed an appeal 'To Society and Students' in which it spoke only of the need to defend 'education and culture'.

In Moscow a group of Social-Democratic students took up a misguided stand against the strike, insisting that it should have a pronounced political character. Lenin devoted a large part of his article to a criticism of this wrong stand.

government not to take the road of reaction and to make use of an excellent opportunity 'to ensure peace and order with the help of reforms' in 'a country exhausted by convulsions'—imploping the students not to resort to unlawful courses which can only play into the hands of reaction, etc. How ancient and antiquated, how hackneyed are all these tunes, and how vividly they resurrect before our eyes what took place twenty years ago or so, at the end of the eighties of last century! The similarity between that time and this is all the more striking when we take the present moment by itself, apart from the three years of revolution we have gone through. For the Duma (at first sight) with only the tiniest difference expresses that same pre-revolutionary relation of forces—the supremacy of the wild landlord, who prefers using Court connections and the influence of his friend the official to any kind of representation; the support of that same official by the merchants (the Octobrists) who do not dare to differ from their benevolent patrons; the 'opposition' of the bourgeois intellectuals who are concerned most of all to prove their loyalty, and who describe appeals to those in power as the political activity of liberalism. And the workers' deputies in the Duma recall feebly, far too feebly, the part which the proletariat was recently playing by its open mass struggle.

It may be asked, can we in such conditions attribute any importance to the old forms of primitive academic struggle of the students? If the liberals have sunk to the level of the 'politics' of the eighties (one can of course only in irony speak of politics in this connection), will it not be a debasement of the aims of Social-Democracy if it decides that it is necessary to support the academic struggle in some way or other?

Here and there, apparently, Social-Democratic students are putting this question. At any rate, our editorial board has received a letter from a group of Social-Democratic students which says, among other things :

'On September 13 a meeting of the students of St. Petersburg University resolved to call upon students for an all-Russian student strike, the reason given for this appeal being the aggressive tactics pursued by Schwartz. The platform of the strike is an academic one, and the meeting even welcomes the "first steps" of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Professional Councils in the struggle for autonomy. We are puzzled by the academic platform put forward at the St. Petersburg meeting, and consider it objectionable in present conditions, because it cannot unite the students for an active struggle on a broad front. We envisage student action only as one co-ordinated with general political action, and in no case apart from it. The elements capable of uniting the students are lacking. In view of this we are against academic action.'

The mistake which the authors of the letter are making is of much greater political importance than may appear at first sight, because their argument, strictly speaking, touches upon a theme which is incomparably more broad and important than the question of taking part in this particular strike.

'We envisage student action only as one co-ordinated with general political action. In view of this we are against academic action.'

Such an argument is radically wrong. The revolutionary slogan—to work towards co-ordinated political action of the students and the proletariat, etc—here ceases to be a live guidance for many-sided militant agitation on a broadening basis and becomes a lifeless dogma mechanically applied to different stages of different forms of the movement. It is not sufficient merely to proclaim political co-ordinate action, repeating the 'last word' in lessons of the revolution. One must *be able* to agitate for political action, *making use* of all possibilities, a conditions and, first and foremost, all mass conflicts between advance elements, whatever they are, and the autocracy. It is not of course question of us dividing every student movement beforehand into compulsory 'stages', and making sure that each stage is properly gone through, out of fear of switching over to 'untimely' political action; etc. Such a view would be the most harmful pedantry, and would lead only to an opportunist policy. But just as harmful is the opposite mistake, when people refuse to reckon with the actual situation that has arisen and the actual conditions of the particular mass movement because of a slogan mis-interpreted as unchangeable. Such an application of a slogan inevitably degenerates into revolutionary phrase mongering.

Conditions are possible when an academic movement lowers the level of a political movement, or divides it, or distracts from it—and in the case Social-Democratic students' groups would of course be bound to concentrate their agitation against such a movement. But anyone can see that the objective political conditions at the present time are different. The academic movement is expressing the *beginning* of a movement among the new 'generation' of students, who have more or less become accustomed to a narrow measure of autonomy; and this movement is beginning when other forms of mass struggle are lacking at the present time, when a lull has set in, and the broad mass of the people, still silently, concentratedly and slowly are continuing to *digest* the experience of the three years of revolution.

In such conditions Social-Democrats would make a big mistake if they declared 'against academic action'. No, the groups of students belonging to our Party must use every effort to support, utilise and extend the movement. Like every other support of primitive forms of movement by Social-Democracy, the present support, too, should consist most of all in ideological and organisational influence on wider sections who have been roused by the conflict, and to whom this form of conflict, as a general rule, is their *first* experience of political conflicts. The student youth who have entered the universities during the last two years have lived a life almost completely detached from politics, and have been educated in a spirit of narrow academic autonomism, educated not only by the professors of the Establishment and the government press but also by the liberal professors and the whole Cadet Party. For this youth a strike on a large scale (if that youth is able to organise a large-scale strike: we must do everything to help it in this undertaking, but of course it is not for us socialists to guarantee the success of any bourgeois movement) is the beginning of a political conflict, whether those engaged in the fight realize it or not. Our job is to explain to the mass of 'academic' protesters the objective meaning of the conflict, to try and

make it *consciously* political, to multiply tenfold the agitation carried on by the Social-Democratic groups of students, and to direct all this activity in such a way that revolutionary conclusions will be drawn from the history of the last three years, that the inevitability of a new revolutionary struggle is understood, and that our old—and still quite timely—slogans calling for the overthrow of the autocracy and the convocation of a constituent assembly should once again become a subject of discussion and the touchstone of political concentration for fresh generations of democrats.

Social-Democratic students have no right to shirk such work under any conditions. And however difficult this work may be at the present time, whatever reverses particular agitators may experience in this or that university, students' association, meeting, etc, we shall say: knock, and it will be opened unto you! The work of political agitation is never wasted. Its success is measured not only by whether we have succeeded here and now in winning a majority, or obtaining consent for co-ordinated political action. It is possible that we shall not achieve this all at once. But that is why we are an organised proletarian party—not to lose heart over temporary failures, but stubbornly, unswervingly and consistently to carry on *our work*, even in the most difficult conditions.

The appeal we print below from the St. Petersburg Joint Student Council shows that even the most active elements of the students obstinately cling to pure academic aims, and still sing the Cadet-Octoberist tune. And this at a time when the Cadet-Octoberist press is behaving in the most disgusting fashion towards the strike, trying to prove at the very height of the struggle that it is harmful, criminal, etc. We cannot but welcome the rejoinder which the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party found it necessary to give the Joint Council (see 'From the Party'²).

Evidently the whips of Schwartz are not enough as yet to change the present-day students from 'academics' into 'politicians'; they need the scorpions of more and more Black-Hundred sergeant-majors to give a full revolutionary training to new cadres. These cadres, trained by all Stolypin's policy, trained by every step of the counter-revolution, require the constant attention of ourselves, the Social-Democrats, who clearly see the objective inevitability of further bourgeois-democratic conflicts on a national scale with the autocracy, which has joined forces with the Black-Hundred Octoberist Duma.

Yes, on a national scale, for the Black Hundred counter-revolution, which is turning Russia backward, is not only tempering new fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat, but will inevitably arouse a new movement of the non-proletarian, i.e. bourgeois democrats (thereby implying, of course, not that *all the opposition* will take part

² The reference is to the decision of the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. published in 'From the Party' column of *Proletary* No. 36 on October 3 (16), 1908. The Committee called on Social-Democrat student groups publicly to dissociate themselves from the appeal of the Joint Students' Council and bring the student movement in line with the tasks of Social-Democracy in the nation-wide struggle against tsarism.

in the struggle, but that there will be a wide participation of truly democratic elements of the bourgeoisie and petite bourgeoisie, i.e. those capable of struggle). The beginning of a mass student struggle in the Russia of 1908 is a political symptom, a symptom of the whole present situation brought about by the counter-revolution. Thousands and millions of threads tie the student youth with the middle and lower bourgeoisie, the petty officials, certain groups of the peasantry, the clergy, etc. If in the spring of 1908 attempts were being made to resurrect the '*Osvozhdeniye Leagu*',³ slightly to the left of the old Cadet semi-landlord union represented by Pyotr Struve; if in the autumn the mass of youth which is closest of all to the democratic bourgeoisie in Russia is beginning to be disturbed; if the hireling hacks, with malice tenfold have started howling once more against revolution in the schools; if base liberal professors and Cadet leaders are groaning and wailing at the untimely, dangerous, disastrous strikes which displease those dear Octobrists, which are capable of 'repelling' the Octobrists who hold power—that means new powder has begun to accumulate in the powder-flask, it means that *not only* among students is the reaction against reaction beginning!

And however weak and embryonic this beginning may be, the party of the working class must make use of it and will do so. We were able to work years and decades before the revolution, carrying our revolutionary slogans first into the study circles, then among the masses of the workers, then on to the streets, then on to the barricades. We must be capable, *now too*, of organizing first and foremost that which constitutes the task of the hour, and without which all talk about co-ordinated political action will be empty words, namely, the task of building a strong proletarian organization, everywhere carrying on *political agitation* among the masses for its revolutionary watchwords. It is this task of organization in their own student midst, this agitation based on the concrete movement, that our university groups, too, should tackle.

The proletariat will not be behindhand. It often yields the palm to the bourgeois democrats in speeches at banquets, in legal unions, within the walls of universities, from the rostrum of representative institutions. It never yields the palm, and will not do so, in the serious and great revolutionary struggle of the masses. All the conditions for bringing this struggle to a head are not ripening as quickly and easily as some of us would hope—but those conditions are ripening and gathering head unswervingly. And the little beginning of little academic conflicts is a great beginning, for after it—if not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then the day after—will follow big continuations.

October 1908

³ *Osvozhdeniye* (Emancipation)—a fortnightly journal published abroad from June 18th (July 1st), 1902 to October 5th (18th), 1905, under the editorship of P. B. Struve. It spoke for the Russian liberal bourgeoisie and consistently spread the ideas of moderately monarchist liberalism. In 1903 the *Osvozhdeniye* League was formed around the journal, finally taking shape in January 1904. The League existed until October 1905, when it came to form the nucleus of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the main party of the Russian bourgeoisie.

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The PCF and its History

The socialist revolution in France cannot be a repetition of the May events, any more than the 1917 Revolution (February and October) was a repetition of 1905. The May events were a tremendous explosion, in which (through tracts, meetings, newspapers and even sometimes through the distorted accounts in the bourgeois press) forgotten revolutionary traditions and intellectual weapons were rediscovered by hundreds of thousands of workers and students. But it must not be thought that a confident and coherent vanguard with properly formulated objectives has arisen out of it. Only a beginning was made—a start which both reflects the unfinished, interrupted character of the revolutionary process and the embryonic, incomplete and contradictory nature of the political leadership which tried to confront the crisis. The abortive revolution of May was profound in its implications for the collective unconscious of the masses, in the energy released in numerous strata of society, in its shock to new and old hierarchical structures; but it was also marked by a kind of political debility

both at the base and at the summit. This is not to deny its exemplary character or its importance as a point of reference for future revolutionary activity, but care must be taken not to idealize all its aspects or to believe that it is a model that can be faithfully reproduced. A political advance, or more exactly a break with the political practice of the various organizations, is necessary if the conditions of victory are to be assured. In particular, the more or less 'instinctive' receptivity of students, technicians and young workers to oppositional Marxist tendencies must be transformed into a creative assimilation of Marxism—which presupposes a fairly rapid ideological clarification of the May movement. In this respect, it is of crucial importance that the theoretical and political positions of the revolutionary current which is now emerging in France should not remain at the level of an abstract and general critique of the PCF (revisionism, social-democratization) but should be such that they erode day by day the conservatism of the PCF's apparatus and its influence on the masses.

The First Years

This is why it is important, indeed essential, to grasp all the dimensions of the problems posed by French Communism, in its specificity. It is not enough to content oneself with defining the party as Stalinist; the modalities of the party's formation and insertion into the French political and social context must be taken into account. Unlike the German and Italian Communist parties, the PCF did not have to confront revolutionary or counter-revolutionary situations during its first years of existence. Although it formed a majority of the working-class movement when the latter split at the Congress of Tours (December 1920), it gradually lost its dominant position during the years which followed the First World War because of its inability to take any initiative. Up to 1923 its leadership represented a slightly rejuvenated version of the ideological and organizational methods of the pre-war Socialist Party. Even when accompanied by inflammatory speeches about the October Revolution and extreme denunciations of the social order represented by the Third Republic, it pursued an essentially parliamentary and electoral strategy. The left wing of the party, which was more proletarian in composition and effectively closer to authentic revolutionary positions, lacked sufficient weight to impose its views. Hence it had constantly to appeal to the Communist International to defend its position at the head of the party. The party thus became more completely dependent on the Soviet leadership of the Communist International than either the German or Italian parties, and this as early as 1924. In fact the Left became the faithful interpreter of policies laid down by the dominant fractions of the CPSU. Lacking the originality and political traditions of the leading tendencies of the German CP (from Brandler to Ruth Fischer) or of the Italian CP (from Bordiga to Gramsci), and with memories of anarcho-syndicalism as its only theoretical equipment, the French party offered only very limited resistance to the conceptions of Zinoviev, and later of Stalin—conceptions heavily influenced by events in Russia. The class struggle in France was now seen only through Moscow's optic. Between 1927 and 1930, for example, the PCF's policy was largely polarized on the hypothetical danger of war between the major capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. Severe repression

accentuated still further the isolation produced by the abstraction and divorce from social reality of its slogans, and thereby reinforced its dependence on the political aid of the International—on the revolutionary prestige and reputation of the USSR. In these conditions it was virtually impossible for the party to resolve the fundamental problems of the time: how to build a united front to win over large masses to communist positions, and how to define a strategy for taking power. The most it could do was to try and make the best of the Comintern's policies. In 1930 the most absurd and ruinous tactics—arbitrary strike decisions and demonstrations, etc.—were abandoned, and with the agreement of the executive committee of the International the Barbé-Celor group was condemned; the PCF now regained, under Thorez, a certain equilibrium. The new line had a dual emphasis: on the one hand great attention to working-class and popular economic demands (wages, unemployment benefits, soldiers' pay) which in particular allowed the CGRU to maintain a minimum link with the masses; on the other a ritual and incantatory denunciation of the SFIO's social-fascism, presented as the main, if not the only obstacle blocking a proletarian revolution—this thesis provided party militants with an explanation for the PCF's relative immobility despite its abundant activism.¹ This mixture of economism and political fantasy obviously did not encourage theoretical work, analysis in depth of French capitalist society or any challenge to the intellectual and political hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Its result was rather to block the incipient politicization of party members at their initial decision to join the party, offering them instead an impoverished and dichotomous vision of the tasks ahead: on one side, a small cohort of the faithful, belonging to the organization and predestined to represent the masses; on the other, a vast category of 'obstacles' to be exorcised. The militants' revolutionary fervour, their undeniable devotion to the Communist cause, was thus transformed into a sort of messianic expectancy, a spirit of unconditional discipline. The path of the future was obscure; the essential was that leaders confirmed by the entire Comintern should be followed without second thoughts.

Popular Front

On the face of it things should have changed after the unity pact with the SFIO in 1934, an alliance which became inevitable after the 1933 catastrophe in Germany and the rise of fascism in France. The PCF did, in fact, abandon many of its most sectarian positions (the theory of social-fascism, the refusal of a united front at the summit) and even made enormous political concessions—under pressure from Stalin—on the positions it had held up to the beginning of 1934. In 1935 it accepted the national defence of the capitalist homeland, and was successful in a bid to ally itself with the Radicals and Socialists in a popular grouping in which it played a very moderate role in comparison with certain Socialists who wanted radical reforms. Going indeed far beyond the wildest hopes of those observers who claimed that it had rallied to a 'responsible' policy, the party did its utmost to limit the effects of the mass movement in June 1936 and to end the strikes and

¹ On this, see Book 2 of Volume II of the *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez* (June 1951-February 1952).

factory occupations. When Marceau Pivert, one of the Socialist Party leaders, asserted that the strength shown by the working class proved that 'everything was possible', Maurice Thorez replied: 'If the aim is now to satisfy economic demands while progressively raising the level of consciousness and organization of the mass movement, then we must be ready to finish as soon as satisfaction has been obtained. We must be ready to compromise even if all the claims have not been met but if victory has been won for the most essential and important of these . . . We must not risk dislocating the unity of the masses, the unity of the Popular Front. We must not allow the working class to be isolated.'² The fact that the PCF refused to participate in the Leon Blum government should not be attributed to its systematic desire to criticize its partners in order to profit from their difficulties. In a report to the Party's Central Committee at Ivry on May 25th 1936, Thorez made it quite clear that he had no intention of pursuing aims he considered too advanced: 'When we said a united front at any price we knew that this was the condition for changing the relation of forces in France to the benefit of the working-class and democratic forces. The presence of Communists in the government under present conditions would only be a pretext for panic, for a campaign of panic.' In August and September 1936, when the difficulties of the Popular Front were growing and divisions were increasing within the coalition, the PCF through Thorez proposed the transformation of the Popular Front into a wider coalition, the French Front. 'Considering in particular the horror of events in Spain, the fact is that we reject the perspective of two irreconcilable blocs that confront each other as one that would lead to civil war, which in our country would be even more fearful than in Spain, if only because of Hitler's threats. The fact is that we believe that one still can and must win over men to the cause of liberty and peace—for how many votes did the Popular Front parties win at the last elections? A few more than five million. And how many votes did those hostile to the popular front receive? Just under five million. As a Communist, do you want me to say that these five million are all fascists, all traitors to their country? Do you want us—faced with these five million, of whom the majority are peasants and workers—to abandon the policy of unity which does honour to our Communist Party? We who have fought for unity between Socialists and Communists, who have fought for the union of radicals, republicans, democrats, do you want us now to say "The path of unity goes no further"?'³

It would have been difficult for the PCF to put into effect a policy more directly aimed at pandering to the French bourgeoisie and limiting working-class action. While there were politicians both on the extreme left and on the right who appreciated this accurately enough, it was not seen as such (i.e. as a bid for an opportunistic arrangement with the western democracies) by the immense majority of Communist militants and cadres, and obviously even less so by Communist voters. While accepting a policy that was hard to distinguish from traditional political reformism, the party leadership neither presented nor conceived it in terms of traditional reformism. Apart from popularizing the defence of

² See Book 3 of Volume XII of *Oeuvres de Maurice Thorez* (May–October 1936, p.48).

³ *Ibid* p.196

economic demands (in opposition to structural reforms) as the only realistic policy compared with any illusory search for a way to deal with the economic and social organization of France at the time, the party leadership took care to reassure its militants that the Popular Front confrontation was not a conflict for the seizure of power by the working class—while stressing that the idea of revolutionary struggle was not abandoned. It was simply that an unforeseen phase—the phase of the struggle against fascism and for the consolidation of bourgeois democracy—had intervened before the phase of the struggle for socialism. Opportunism was thus reconciled with a revolutionary dogmatism designed to preserve the internal cohesion of the organization and the continuity of the party leadership. The anti-fascist ‘prior condition’ now came in a sense to replace the social-democratic ‘obstacle’ as justification of the fact that the PCF did not seek the objective of taking power, while at the same time still claiming to monopolize the revolutionary spirit.

Resistance, Cold War and 20th Congress

The same explicative schema is again to be found during the Resistance: the PCF is a revolutionary party, but before dreaming about socialism, national independence must be regained, collaborators swept out and political democracy organized. At first sight, the Three-Party Coalition after the Liberation appears to contradict this schema because the Communists participated in the government and, with their Socialist and MRP partners, were responsible for a certain number of reforms such as nationalizations; at the same time on the theoretical plane they heralded this governmental collaboration with a fraction of the dominant class as the dawn of a ‘new democracy’ which would supersede bourgeois democracy and the capitalist State. On closer observation, however, it is apparent that not only was the difference between ‘new democracy’ and democracy very imprecise, and the frontiers between these two forms of society barely traced out, but that the Communist leaders relegated the struggle for Socialist democracy to a time well beyond the immediate present. In consequence they could allege the tasks not yet accomplished to justify the need for a ‘Marxist-Leninist’ party and thereby maintain distinction from social-democratic (Blumist) ideology. The Communist departure from the government in 1947 rapidly sealed the fate of these elucubrations on ‘new democracy’ without, however, leading to a revision by the principal party leaders of their concepts of political struggle. During the entire period of the Cold War, their fixed objective was the reconquest of national independence from American imperialism and its French lackeys. To this end they had to seek an alliance with the ‘national’ bourgeoisie and with all strata of society opposed to the domination of American capital. It hardly needs to be emphasized that such an orientation could not be revolutionary, even if on occasion it led to serious confrontations with the State (as in 1952) and to other more or less adventurist undertakings.

Since the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, and above all since the advent of Gaullism, another orientation has gradually come to predominate. According to this conception, the Party’s task is to defeat

the power of the monopolies and install a true democracy, which would not be Socialist democracy but would open the way to it. The new theme is thus very close to that of the period from 1945 to 1946; but it is developed in a different context, marked in particular by a pronounced evolution of social-democracy to the right. It has thus made such concessions to the post-Stalinist climate as admission of a plurality of parties in the transition to socialism, the importance of structural reforms and the parliamentary road. However, from this new orientation to the conclusion that the PCF has simply become a social-democratic party, there is a step which should not be taken. The PCF still aspires to be the party of the working class, the for-itself of the class in-itself, and it still lays claim to leadership of the Labour movement, as the French detachment of the international army which is supposed to constitute the 'socialist camp'. In effect, the links which tie it to the non-capitalist countries of Europe, whatever the internal difficulties of the latter, appear to guarantee that it continues to seek a different economic and social order. It no longer has an immutable model to offer those whose follow its lead, but at best 'experiences' which, however imperfect they may seem at first sight, nevertheless indicate that a social system different from capitalist society can exist. By comparison with social-democracy, whose only possible references are Scandinavia, the PCF is thus able to suggest that it hopes for much more profound and complete transformations of the present social order. Of course, the superiority of the 'socialist camp' is subject to doubt. It is certainly no longer military (if it ever was), it is not obvious economically (if the criterion is a higher *per capita* income than the main Western powers), but it does seem evident as far as the form of social organization is concerned (production for profit is no longer the first imperative). Thus Waldeck-Rochet is able to define 'what it means to be a revolutionary in our time' by asserting that the PCF does not reduce its activity to seeking reintegration into the most banal routines of French political life under the Fifth Republic, but in spite of everything aims at a plausible horizon beyond capitalism, even if this goal does not seem accessible in the immediate future. However abstract it may be in the minds of most militants, it at least has the concrete and irrefutable character of something which already exists on the same continent. Hence the party can always play on the combination of its 'reasonable' policies in the present and its aim of a qualitatively different (revolutionary!) if very hypothetical future.

Politicization of the Masses ?

A balance-sheet of the politicization of the French working masses by the PCF must therefore conclude that it has been both partial and ambiguous. It has certainly developed their consciousness of the social antagonisms, the differences in styles of life and values of everyday existence, between the higher and lower classes of society. But it has not raised these oppositions to the level where they reveal the irreducible contradictions between two different modes of production, and between two incommensurable and irreconcilable types of politics. Thanks to the PCF, socialism has become the hope of millions of men in our country (a decisive progress compared with the epoch before the First World War); but it has unfortunately not become a definite and

specific task to be assumed as a function of present conflicts, but at most a sort of projection into the future of solutions which the Party dares not elaborate or advocate with adequate clarity and precision in the midst of the difficulties created by capitalism. In truth, the French working class has never been accustomed by the PCF to think in terms of real relationships of force. There was always a preparatory phase which avoided class confrontations, and which allowed it to shut its eyes to the political manoeuvres planned by the different fractions of the ruling class. The reactions of the petite bourgeoisie and of the middle classes were either idealized (that is to say, conceived as very close to those of the working masses), or on the contrary described very pessimistically (no extremism which might throw the petite bourgeoisie into the arms of fascism), not as a function of the dynamic relationships between classes, but of ephemeral diplomatic or parliamentary relationships. The result was that French workers never had a chance of learning to assess their affairs and enemies soundly.

In this domain, the inflammatory statements with which parties of notables in France are always so lavish came to seem more important than their actions (e.g. the analysis of the Radical Party as a progressive party during the Popular Front period). Relations of forces were not appreciated in their changing reality, but in a static perspective, almost as though fluidity of all positions attained was not the rule right up to the definitive victory. In fact, French workers were not prepared for the essential struggle, the struggle for power. The party that represented them, on the contrary, tended to keep them in a state of ideological tutelage, to make them delegate to it the hard task of the confrontation with the bourgeoisie. Thus the relations established between party and class were quite different from those Marx foresaw between a revolutionary vanguard and masses increasingly conscious of the difficulties to be overcome before capitalist exploitation could be destroyed. The party plunged into summit manoeuvres and bureaucratic manipulation, while the masses only intermittently and partially emerged from the passivity imposed on them by the capitalist system. In this context, which the Communist leaders naturally regard as normal, every irruption of the masses on to the political stage other than in 'tested' forms of mobilization could not and cannot but appear as irrational or even as the fruit of obscure manoeuvres. Despite its ridiculous nature, the theory of the Gaullist-leftist plot developed by Waldeck-Rochet in his analysis of the May movement was entirely consistent with this way of thinking and acting.

Conclusion

Such an analysis certainly does not absolve the PCF, but it shows that the process of social-democratization that it has undergone in the last few years is neither simple nor rectilinear. To preserve its position as the dominant party in the French workers' movement, a position acquired historically in opposition to classical social democracy, it has to maintain a minimum of originality with respect to its partners, hence the perpetually recast definition of a 'revolutionary' orthodoxy. To retain the trust of its cadres, its militants and its sympathizers, the majority of whom are not yet reconciled to the idea of a simple adjust-

ment of capitalism, it must carry on the polemic against reformism. This means that to ensure its 're-integration into French political life' (i.e. its acceptance by the bourgeoisie), it must admit that it is torn in its attitude between the concessions it has to make to prove its goodwill to the 'democrats and other republicans', and the concessions it must not make if it is to preserve its links with the anti-capitalist sector of opinion. This contradiction, which is still no more than painful, may become unbearable, and it is then likely that the majority of Communist leaders would opt for the wrong side; but its very existence allows the revolutionary forces to react and intervene so as to transform its slow social democratization into a continual series of crises. But beware! If there is one further important lesson arising from this analysis, it is that it is no good taking as a model some earlier period of French Communism before Stalin, or under Thorez before 1956. The matrix of the PCF's failings and errors lies in the relations it originally established with the masses and with political activity during its formative period, when it was breaking with the conceptions of French Socialism from 1905 to 1914. So a critique of the PCF can only be a real reconstruction of the politics of the French workers' movement, accompanied by a redefinition of the relations between the political vanguard and the masses.



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The Way Forward

Votes, as Marx and Engels used to say, give the right to govern, they do not give the power to do so. Conversely, to win votes, or to win by votes, the opposition must already have shown that it is capable of *taking* and *exercising* power in a substantially different manner from that which has prevailed hitherto.

This truth was resoundingly confirmed during the *abortive* May-June revolution. How could a Left, which had been unable to assert its power to govern when power was in its grasp, expect that votes would give it what it had been unable to take when nine million workers were on strike against the power of capitalism. From the moment that those political parties which historically claimed to represent the working class showed themselves incapable of offering an outlet to the popular uprising and an alternative to the régime, it was only logical that they would be crushed by reaction and abandoned by a million of their voters.

It is now not so much a matter of seeking the reasons of this failure, or of

denouncing those responsible, as of shedding light on certain fundamental aspects of the May-June crisis and of drawing the lessons for the future.

Because this revolutionary crisis was started by unorganized movements and reached its climax through the initiatives of the student and working-class base, there is now a strong temptation to pose the problem of how to overthrow the bourgeois State in anarcho-syndicalist terms: relying on mass spontaneity, seeing insurrection as the only road to revolution, and repudiating not only the old bureaucratic apparatuses but also the preparatory work and political leadership in which the latter showed themselves incapable.

Attractive as it may seem in certain respects, a return to anarcho-syndicalism would, in fact, be an intellectual and political regression; worse still, it would be to misunderstand the nature of bourgeois power and the revolutionary process that is capable of bringing about its downfall and carrying the working class to power. The question of taking power was posed in May, and must continue to be posed; so too must the question of the instrument necessary for taking power, the new type of revolutionary party. But such questions cannot be posed and replied to simply in terms of a *gamble on the short-term repetition* of spontaneous, insurrectionary general strike. That would be to return to revolutionary *attentism*; to the theory of all or nothing according to which the revolution must be a quasi-instantaneous act or become bogged down in petty reformism, and until the great day there is nothing much to be done apart from agitation and propaganda.

It is this point that, once again, needs to be made today.

1. Maximalism

The May general strike was directed as much against the political and trade-union apparatuses of the working class as it was against the régime. The strike was neither foreseen, prepared, understood nor channelled by these apparatuses. It revealed the disjuncture between the working class and its leaders; the latter were not aware of the depth of working-class discontent, nor did they know its reasons; *a fortiori* they were incapable of translating these reasons into demands which would at once raise the level of consciousness of the proletariat, take account of the workers' refusal of their condition at the workplace and in society, and orientate their combativity towards objectives which once attained, would transform the condition of the working class and lastingly dislocate bourgeois power.

It was their inability to give the struggle a set of indissolubly linked industrial and political objectives—which, once realized, would unleash a revolutionary process destined rapidly to transcend the initial demands—that determined the ambiguous aspect of the general strike: at once both trade-unionist and virtually insurrectionary. For the fact that the strike's aims remained indeterminate meant that it appeared as an undifferentiated, global rejection of the régime and of capitalist society. Hence it became objectively maximalist: victory had

to be complete and immediate, or nothing would be won at all; between total victory and total defeat there was no half-way stage; it was all or nothing.

This objective maximalism gave an immediate, objective insurrectionary meaning to the strike, but it also contained the seed of its own failure. For the insurrectionary general strike is closer to primitive revolt than to revolutionary action *if it does not give way to a political offensive* aimed at administering the coup de grâce to a weakened enemy and at creating organs of workers' power and co-ordination, with a *previously prepared* programme and political openings. In the absence of such preparation, the radicalism of the immediate global refusal is merely the obverse of the indeterminate objectives, of the lack of strategy. By remaining largely 'instinctive', i.e. spontaneous and un-thought out, the movement allows economic demands to express revolutionary aspirations and vice versa. This confusion should surprise no one: maximalist or purely trade-unionist or both at the same time, the movement remains at the level of immediate demands because it lacks the mediations that would allow it to organize its action in time and in space, with a conscious aim in view—that would allow it to adopt a strategy.

The inadequacy of the traditional apparatuses thus condemned the movement not to achieve any clear awareness of its potentialities, and not to leave behind any political gains.

2. Spontaneity

Thus it is important not to take the May movement's elemental upsurge as a sign of originality and strength, when in fact this was the opposite face of its profound weakness. Nor, under the pretext that the movement revealed the revolutionary potential of the working class which had until then remained latent, must we throw overboard the work of political reflection on revolutionary strategy in the advanced capitalist countries which, though insufficient, has been undertaken in Europe during the past 20 years, simply to return to the theory of all or nothing, of 'zero hour', of the system's sudden collapse.

This is all the more so because a similar potentially revolutionary crisis cannot be deliberately reproduced, with better chances of revolutionary victory the second time. On the contrary, the May movement was only possible because it took bourgeois power by surprise, and because, without either organization or revolutionary political leadership, its meaning from the start escaped even the masses who were its protagonists. The masses by surprise succeeded in rushing into the breach opened by the students; imitating the student's example, they exploited the retreat which the latter had forced the régime to make. Power at that moment seemed suddenly in their grasp. If a political force both able and determined to take power had existed, if such a force had spurred on the working class to create its own organs of control and local power, the working class would doubtless have followed. The first phase of a revolutionary process would have been won by surprise—but only the first phase. The trial of strength which would

have followed would have taken place in circumstances extremely favourable to the working class. In control of the productive apparatus and of public services, it would in this first stage have been able to push a provisional government (a necessarily composite formation since its leaders would not have been formed by a long revolutionary struggle) to take over the State apparatus; and by the strength of its own mobilization it would have deterred the partisans of armed repression. For all that, it is not certain that a trial of armed strength would have been avoided. For the revolutionary process to be carried through to its end, it would in fact have been necessary for the working class, led by a vanguard party which itself developed rapidly during the struggle, to have pushed beyond such programmes as provisional governments are capable of conceiving, and to have imposed an acceleration and radicalization of social transformation. A second trial of strength, with the risk of civil war, would then have been engaged. Supposing it had been won, thanks to the combativity of the working class and to the important positions of power it had succeeded in winning in the country, this second trial would, like the first, have been the result—unforeseen at the start—of a revolutionary process whose logic and risks, though necessarily calculated and taken by the revolutionary leaders, *would not have been fully measured by the masses at the start.*

But they would have to be measured, and from the start, by a movement which proposed *deliberately* to repeat the May uprising. What is more the inherent risks for such a movement have now increased; circumstances are less favourable. The bourgeoisie is on its guard, ready for a trial of armed strength, and the petite bourgeoisie is frightened. To suppose that the May uprising can be repeated is to suppose that the working class is subjectively prepared for civil war, both materially and politically.

This is not the case.¹ It is one thing to accept a trial of armed strength when this stems from a movement which, though limited in its demands at the start, is radicalized by the effect of its success, by the possibilities it discovers *en route*, by the victories it wins over bourgeois power: the trial of strength is then the last moment of a battle all of whose earlier stages have been victorious. The working class here is not mounting an assault on the fortress of bourgeois power; on the contrary it is defending the conquest it has won by 'peaceful' means, and beating off the counter-attack from a position of strength. It is a different matter deliberately to accept from the start the risk of an insurrectionary confrontation with a State that is vigilant, intact and ready for battle. To accept such a risk is not and cannot be the task of the working masses even when led by a resolute vanguard; it can only be the task of an active minority. And the latter's frontal struggle against the State only takes on the value and meaning of an example in the eyes of the masses in certain circumstances, notably when this struggle is based on a set of transitional aims which make explicit and politicize popular expectations.

¹ If, in fact, this can ever be the case in an advanced capitalist country, outside of an acute political and military crisis.

3. The 'Guevarist' Strategy

We are touching here on the conditions of possibility for a 'Guevarist' strategy, and on the limits of its validity. The immediate aim of armed insurrection by a minority is not to beat the forces of repression, not to conquer power, not to start a general insurrection—but progressively to create the conditions for a *political* radicalization of the masses. The first objective is to force the State openly to identify itself with violence and with the repressive forces on which its power rests. But this initial function—apparent precisely in the students' struggle which is *first and foremost* a refusal to accept an order experienced as authoritarian and repressive—has political effect only in so far as the corrupt and arbitrary character of the established authorities is latently evident, *before the insurrection*, to the working masses and to an important part of the petite bourgeoisie. In other words, in so far as the decomposition of the society (the corruption of the dominant class, the State's servility to oligarchic and foreign interests, its divorce from the nation's interests and identity) is evident, notably, in discredited institutions, in a crisis of State authority, in the practical impossibility for the dominant group or groups to base its power on any ideological hegemony: power then becomes synonymous with arbitrary, lying, cynical, brute domination. It is only in these conditions—conditions which existed in China and Cuba and presently exist in part of Latin America and the Caribbean—that armed insurrection, instead of being the *culmination* of a phase of political preparation (preparation that is impossible here by 'peaceful' means) *itself takes the place of this preparation*.

Rebels of petit-bourgeois origin, the first groups of 'Guevarist' insurgents aim to pose in dramatic fashion moral and national demands. But obviously they cannot remain at that level: to advance, they must find a social base for their revolt, win over the working class to revolutionary aims conceived outside it. The rebellion must differentiate its methods and objectives in accordance with these new aims; under threat of failure, it is thereby forced to learn the tasks of revolutionary struggle. Terrorism is thus not a *short-cut* which economizes on political work: it is the *point of departure* for such work, and creates the need and the conditions for it. The insurgents have to take on the role of vanguard political organization or be isolated and crushed. The guerrilla has to become a school of political formation; create revolutionary cadres; work out in the field a transitional programme adapted to the level of consciousness of the masses and constantly re-adapted as this level is raised by the struggle.

Thus, contrary to romantic and maximalist conceptions, 'Guevarism' is fundamentally distinct from the theory of 'all or nothing'. It does not pose the seizing of power by the working classes as its immediate objective. It does not aim at a passage to socialism without any transitional stages. It does not claim that the revolution is an entity, complete as an idea before even being made, and that transitional reforms and intermediate objectives are dangerous mystifications.² On the contrary, the programme of the FLN is a democratic, not a socialist pro-

² See Fidel Castro's speech of April 9 1968.

gramme; it does not claim to model South Vietnam in North Vietnam image. The programme of the 26 July movement, at the moment of its victory in Cuba, was neither socialist nor even explicitly anti-imperialist. In both cases (as also in China, in 1949) it was a question of transitional programmes: i.e. of a set of fundamental reforms aimed at setting in motion a revolutionary process during which the self-education of the masses (and of their leaders) will lead to the superseding of the initial reforms and objectives.

In short, the unifying political perspective of a revolutionary movement cannot be the immediate construction of socialism and of communism i.e. a post-revolutionary society. It can only be that of a revolutionary transformation of the present society by means of a range of intermediary objectives. By this must be understood not a succession of gradual and predetermined reforms, each posed as an end in itself, but the realization of a set of reforms linked to each other, corresponding to the aspirations of the masses. These must *irreversibly* shift the balance of power in favour of the working class, dislocate capitalist society and demand the transition to socialism as the only alternative to regression. Put another way, the function of intermediary objectives is to make evident the necessity for the transition to socialism, to prefigure it in certain concrete aspects, to set in motion the revolutionary process without necessarily taking socialism as its explicit short-term aim. Thus it is not of the masses that one should demand a prior socialist consciousness but of the vanguard. It is not at the programmatic level that socialism must be posed as the aim, but through the inter-connection and the political dynamic of the programmatic objectives; through the method of struggle for these objectives which must in themselves constitute an apprenticeship and experience of workers' power through the *conceptual* level of the programme which, as a coherent articulation of intermediary objectives with the mass actions necessary to impose them, must be understood as the starting signal for a revolutionary process destined to go beyond all the initial objectives.

The socialist consciousness of the masses will only be created during this process, on condition of course that such a consciousness exist among the leaders, as a capacity to define the initial intermediary objectives which can take the movement to the point of non-return and later those more advanced objectives which will supersede the initial ones: in other words as strategy.

4. The Failure of the PCF

It would be illusory to believe that the next social crisis in France could start straight away from the highest level reached during the course of the May-June crisis. It would be equally illusory to believe that it is necessary to start from a revolutionary general strike with, as its declared aim, the seizure of power by the working class. The abortive May revolution cannot take the place of political preparation or of formative experience. In this respect everything, or nearly everything, remains to be done.

This is why it would be foolish to reproach the PCF with not having

launched the masses against the State last May, of not having inaugurated working-class power, socialism. To this kind of argument, the Party can answer, without embarrassment, that there is nothing to prove that the masses were ready for socialism. In fact, we know they were not, any more (or hardly more) than the PCF itself. It is more than probable that the Gaullist régime could have been overthrown; it is certain that by establishing centres of workers' power entire sections of the capitalist system could have been overthrown, and that the working class, properly led, could have prevented the provisional government from restoring the system. But that the capitalist system could have been swept aside in one fell swoop is an untenable thesis: for this, a revolutionary process far longer and more progressive than two to four weeks of potentially insurrectionary strike action would have been necessary.

More to the point is to reproach the PCF for its inability to set in motion the revolutionary process; for its inability to channel the combativity of the masses towards the creation of organs of popular and working-class power; for its inability to become the pole of political attraction of the workers' and popular committees which did arise spontaneously; for its inability to take advantage of the power actually won by the working class at the height of the struggle in order to undermine the basis and authority of the régime by the conquest of permanent positions of strength. For to have made no attempt, by creating nuclei of working-class power and organs of popular power, to capitalize on the state of mobilization of the working class; to have made no attempt to carry revolutionary consciousness to its apogee nor to fix it as a future point of reference by means of actions capable of serving as examples; to have repudiated as 'contrary to the agreement' the demands for workers' power espoused by the CFDT³; to have offered the movement as its

³ Were these imprecise and ambiguous? No problem. It was merely necessary to point this out. They corresponded perfectly to the state of mind of the working-class base. They constitute the ideal type of dynamic conquest for whose defence and extension an appeal can be made to the initiative and imagination of the base. They represent the kind of gain which capitalism experiences the greatest difficulty in absorbing, and which is bound to sharpen class antagonism.

All this, naturally, on condition that workers' power is understood in the first place as a power exercised over the workplace and organization of work (at least partial technical self-management and mastery over the machine), and not as an administrative power accepting the limits and criteria of capitalist profitability. When the organ of the JCR asserts—a thesis which it should be said was subsequently corrected in the same pages, notably by Henri Weber—that 'the only power that the workers or students can win within their own sector is the power to participate in the capitalist administration of the sector in question', since 'the question of power is a global question' (*L'Avant-Garde*, May 27 1968), it is quite simply relapsing into the 'theory' of all or nothing: it is necessary to seize power globally, at one fell swoop, or be defeated globally—a view which excludes any idea of revolutionary process, of strategy, of dual power.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, on the other hand, has remarked very correctly: 'I do not believe that revolution is possible just like that, from one day to the next. I think that one can only win a series of adjustments, of greater or lesser significance, but that these adjustments can only be imposed by revolutionary action . . . It is necessary to fight step by step, starting from a global contestation.' (Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre. *Nouvel Observateur*, 1968.)

Workers' power could not at once be global, but it could concretize the global refusal of the system which it implies and unleash, by way of the demands which are inherent in its exercise, a process of struggle investing every aspect of the capitalist relations of production.

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sole conquest a rise in wages, which of all conquests is the one that capitalism reabsorbs most easily—unless (which was not the case) the working-class movement is prepared, politically and industrially, to prevent that reabsorption by exploiting the disequilibrium in the system provoked by the wage-increases; to have rejected any political and ideological union between the working class, the students and the vanguards of the intellectual professions; to have gambled on an electoral victory which was ruled out from the moment that the régime was left intact, master of the field, and no perspective was offered for a future resurgence; all these demonstrate the highest degree of sheer bureaucratic stupidity of which a working-class and socialist party could possibly become guilty.

In fact, the PCF was so put out by the fact that the workers, with the initiatives they were taking in actual struggle, should come and disturb the *18th-à-18th* between the Communist and Federation apparatuses, that it behaved like the East German State in Bertolt Brecht's satirical poem⁴ and, in a hurry to put an end to this annoying *contretemps*, at no moment sought to draw a strategic advantage for the working class from the position of strength which it momentarily occupied.

It would be presumptuous to attempt to define here what might have been the intermediary objectives of a transitional programme. It is not only their content that counts, but equally the method and climate of their creation through the direct participation of the base; the latter alone is capable of guaranteeing the democratic character of the programme and, by multiplying its organs of popular power in the centres of production and habitation, of preparing and morally arming the masses against any attempt at restoration. Such a line, clearly, is not only incompatible with the present structure and methods of the PCF, but also with the belief—which its leaders share with that other Stalinist converted to social-democracy, Pietro Nenni—that the State is a *neutral instrument* 'open to a revolution from above in the direction of socialism'⁵: in other words that the State of monopoly capitalism, provided that it is in the hands of a working-class party, can be utilized *just as it is* for the passage to socialism.⁶ This belief, as Nicos Poulantzas notes, explains the constant oscillation of the PCF between a pseudo-maximalist position—what counts is to enter the control-room of the

⁴ After the rising of East German workers of June 17 1953, Bert Brecht wrote:

'After the rising of 17 June,
the secretary of the Association of Writers
had leaflets distributed in Stalin Avenue,
and in these one could read that the people
had lost the government's trust,
and that they could only regain it
by working twice as hard as before. Wouldn't it be
simpler for the government
to dissolve the people
and elect a new one?'...

⁵ The formula was coined by Nicos Poulantzas, *Pouvoir politique et classes sociales*, Maspéro 1968, especially pp. 286–298.

⁶ See Lucio Magri's article 'State and Revolution Today', published in *Problemi del Socialismo* No. 22 for September 1967, and translated in *Les Temps Modernes* No. 266–7 for August/September 1968.

State; everything else will follow; the masses must mandate the communist deputies to do this, and meanwhile remain quiet—and a right wing opportunist practice, which consists in paying for the right of entry into the control-room with compromises, alliances at the summit and the demagogic defence of narrowly corporate interests.

5. Functions of the Revolutionary Party

The aim of these remarks is not so much to criticize gratuitously the leadership of the PCF as to pose the question of which type of revolutionary party and which strategy will permit a revolutionary process of transition to socialism once again to become possible in an advanced capitalist country. Indeed, the fact that the PCF is incapable of assuming the functions of a revolutionary party by no means signifies that the problem of revolution must be envisaged henceforth, in the absence of any party capable of guiding it and bringing it to fruition, as the pure product of spontaneous movements. On the contrary, it must be remembered that the function of the party remains irreplaceable in at least four respects (which is not necessarily to say—we will come back to this—that the conditions for the creation of a revolutionary party are fully assembled):

a) *Function of theoretical analysis and elaboration.* The problem of a strategy for the struggle, and for the revolutionary transformation of society cannot even be posed in the absence of a continually updated analysis of the evolution and contradictions of capitalist society at all its levels: of the conflicts of interest which fissure the ruling bloc; of the weak points which, if attacked, offer the possibility of breaking and discrediting the enemy front; of the respective positions of the forces and movements which are actually or potentially anti-capitalist within the productive process; of the position of the national bourgeoisie in the system of relations of the capitalist world; of the adaptation or inadaptation of the institutional structures, etc.

The fact that this function is not at present carried out by any party has a double consequence: the activity of the political apparatuses is limited essentially to day-to-day tactical manoeuvres and demagogic improvisation, incapable of making any lasting impact on the stability of the system, within whose limits they by and large remain. When, inversely, the necessity for the revolutionary groups and movements to situate themselves outside the parties and pose the problem of the revolutionary transformation of society in terms of insurrectionary struggle. However, though insurrectionary struggle may detonate a revolutionary process in an already disintegrating society and State, in a politically and ideologically integrated society it can only succeed best in revealing the limits of that integration, its possible points of rupture, and in throwing its political institutions into crisis. That is already a great deal, but it is only the beginning, the negative moment of the political work which has to be accomplished.

b) *Function of ideological synthesis* of sectional contradictions and demand a synthesis which respects their specificity and their autonomy. This function can be identified with the ideological hegemony which the

revolutionary party must win in order to be able to construct the 'bloc' of anti-capitalist forces which will shatter the unity of the dominant bloc and wrest power from it. This 'bloc' should not be taken to mean merely an 'alliance' between the classes or strata exploited by the bourgeoisie. The weakness of the traditional type of alliance is that it is a juxtaposition of groups of sectional interests and grievances that are simply aggregated in their particularity, and translated into a catalogue of demands: from such an aggregate there can never spring a critique of existing society, nor the unifying perspective of transcending it through common struggle.

The absence of a revolutionary party is thus expressed by a multiplicity of demands and struggles for partial objectives, immanent to the system, with neither organic links between them nor unity of perspective. The potentially anti-capitalist forces engage in *parallel* and *successive* battles which, by virtue of a false conception of 'the concrete', remain totally abstract. They lack the theoretical capacity to perceive, beyond the immediately apparent reasons for discontent, the determinant reasons—i.e. in the last resort the capitalist relations of production—and to oppose to neo-capitalist ideology (to its type of rationality and to its system of values) a higher conception of rationality, of civilization, of culture: a conception in the light of which sectional demands are at once critically illuminated in their relativity, integrated, and transcended at a higher level. . .

In this respect too, the radicalism of the student movement is a positive contribution: the latter has from the start taken up a position outside the system, refusing the notion of objective impossibilities as *a priori* unacceptable and the system as to be rejected globally. However, by virtue of the fact that it is a sectional movement—and not the vanguard of a class—the student movement does not have the means to claim ideological and political hegemony, for the construction of an anti-capitalist bloc. The student movement can only put itself forward as a theoretical and practical expression, at a specific level, of the contradiction between capitalist relations of production and productive forces. It can, at this specific level, be a suppurating wound in the side of the bourgeois political society and State, and, through the radicalism of its actions and positions, keep the latter in a state of permanent crisis—while at the same time bearing witness *vis-à-vis* the working-class movement to the possibility and necessity of a radicalization of the struggle at all levels.

Its contribution to the general crisis of the system can thus be decisive, and lasting, but on condition that it is integrated into the strategy of the class struggle as a specific and autonomous component of that struggle. It is because such integration is refused it that the student movement is permanently tempted to set itself up as a substitute for a revolutionary party and a working-class vanguard—naturally without being able to fill that role. Left to itself, the student movement can only transcend its sectional limits by an abstract appeal to the class-in-itself and to revolution-in-itself. The working-class movement, however, could only hold this against it on the condition that it match its critique of the student movement by an auto-critique of its own corporate and

economist deviations.⁷ Only a revolutionary party, which integrated every dimension of the anti-capitalist struggle into a project of radical transformation of all levels of social life, could cause the student movement to transcend its limits, and could enable the working-class movement to harness the revolutionary potential of student struggles.

c) *Function of education and of political leadership.* A further function of the party is to incarnate the permanence of the struggle and its objectives even in periods when the tide of revolution is on the ebb. It prefigures the proletarian State, and reflects for the working class its capacity to be a ruling class. It incarnates the presence of socialism within capitalism, since it is a positive negation of the latter. It guarantees the survival of the movement and of revolutionary consciousness in trough periods in which the balance of forces precludes head-on battles. Yet, if it is to be able to carry out these functions, the party must aspire to being at once the memory and the prefiguration of struggles more advanced than those which are possible at a given moment. It must appear to every worker as the guarantee that all that can be done will be done, in all circumstances, to break the enemy front and emancipate the working class. Not that the party ought to direct every local or sectional struggle from the centre. Its guiding function consists rather in situating any given struggle within the general framework of the class struggle; also in making explicit the way in which the immediate and local demands of the workers in reality transcend their specific situation, and the way in which these local demands mesh into and define the intermediary objectives of a transitional strategy. In this respect, far from setting itself up as the defender of a predetermined political line, to which social struggles should be subordinated at all costs, the party, through its total mobility, must appear capable not only of adopting, but also of *catalysing* the demands thrown up by the base, in so far as they lead into a programme of radical transformation of society and illustrate its necessity.⁸

Let me underline the term *catalyse*; for the function of a programme of structural transformations is not to reflect passively the kind of demands and level of consciousness of the workers at a given moment, but to stimulate demands by deepening the consciousness which the working class has of the intolerability of its condition, and by showing that very advanced demands can be satisfied and what the conditions are for their satisfaction. Pushing back the limits of the possible by revealing the possibility and the conditions of possibility of changes which seem out of reach (and which, indeed, cannot be lasting within

⁷ See Rossana Rossanda: 'L'anno degli studenti', De Donato 1968, of which a chapter was translated in *Les Temps Modernes* No. 266-7 for August/September 1968.

⁸ This, of course, presupposes the faculty of analysis mentioned above, and a knowledge of the content and the potential meaning of the demands upon which the programme may be axed. The toughness of the strikes at Peugeot, at Rhodiaséta, at Saviem, etc since 1966, with their essentially qualitative objectives, already demonstrated the abstraction and anachronism of the PCF and CGR line, in relation to the potential consciousness of large sectors of the working class. The way in which these strikes were not exploited, or were actually held back and side-tracked, by the CGR because they risked embarrassing the electoral 'strategy' of the PCF, appears in retrospect as a dress rehearsal for the attitude of the PCF in May 1968.

the framework of the system), is one of the surest means of reinforcing working-class combativity.

The programme *too* is such a means, particularly in so far as, through its coherence, it renders credible objectives to which the working class will fully commit itself only if the political instruments permitting their realization are defined. The objective of a 1,000 franc per month minimum salary in the car industry, for example, was not very credible, in May 1968, for many of the workers ('it will be taken away from us again by increased prices and a higher degree of exploitation'), although it was a demand thrown up from the base. But this objective, which in itself smacks of demagoguery and is purely trade-unionist, takes on a revolutionary significance if it is defined by the ensemble of anti-capitalist structural reforms which are the condition of its effective realization.

What economic, social and industrial policy, what type of planning and distribution can permit large increases in low wages without any increase of unemployment, without inflation, without loss of efficiency in the economy as a whole? That is a typical question of economic policy in the transitional period: it brings into question the relations of production, the relations of exchange, the structure of the active population, the character of education, the choice of civilization, etc.—whence its educative value. It is a question to which the party's programme must be capable of giving a reply. If it is incapable of providing such a reply and of translating it into objectives in the struggle; if it is not capable, armed with such a reply, of enacting an objective critique—on the political level and on that of mass action—of the measures by which the capitalist system seeks to reabsorb the increases in low wages which have been wrested from it; then in that case discouragement and scepticism tend to gain sway over the masses: everything that happens makes it seem as though they had demanded the impossible. In short, to break the equilibrium of the system, without being able to exploit and resolve its crisis to the advantage of the working class, means to allow one's victories to be transformed into defeats.

Similarly, momentarily to shake the power of the bourgeoisie without being able to wrest from it positions of power from which the struggle can be pursued and the power of the bourgeois State thrown into crisis, means in the last resort to reinforce the bourgeoisie by allowing it to repair the breaches after its own fashion.

This brings us to the fourth function of the party.

d) *Function of seizing power and transforming the State.* A special study would be needed to show how the administrative and political centralization of power has weighed on political life in France, inciting popular movements to demand of the central power the solution to every and any problem, and inciting political parties to assume the role, more than anything else, of potential managers of a State held to be omnipotent. Centralization of the State in France leads to a statist distortion of political ideology and political life at all levels of society. Popular mobilizations are viewed in France either as protests demand-

ing the intervention of central power in favour of the underprivileged categories (*Pompidou, nos sons!*), or, at best, as a mass support which should allow the opposition parties to express more forcibly their claim to manage the State.

This centralist, statist ideology is one of the principal obstacles to the birth and dissemination of a revolutionary ideology. It assigns a subordinate position to mass action, and stands in the way of any education or emancipation of the workers through self-determination of the methods and objectives of their struggle and through a democratic life at the base. The weakness of the French political parties, the relationship of patronage that exists between them and the electorate, the weight of their notables and their central bureaucracies, are to be explained to a considerable extent in this way—as too are the unchanging nature of the structures and Stalinist mentality of the PCF.

Yet even if they are more manifest there, the twin blights of centralization and bureaucracy are not peculiar to the French parties. Reinforcement of the central power, erosion of regional power and of autonomous local institutions are part and parcel of the domination of monopoly capital. It therefore follows that every party whose proposed vocation is to run the State apparatus and a modern capitalist society without changing them moulds its structure on that of the State as it is. A revolutionary party, on the other hand, defines itself by its ability to make a critique at once theoretical and practical of the authoritarian centralizing character of the State—a character which expresses the domination of bourgeois monopoly. It defines itself by its ability to destroy the myth of the ineluctably authoritarian and centralizing nature of the 'industrial State', whether capitalist or socialist. What would be involved in this act of destruction? Notably: to allow, in every area, the sovereignty and initiative of the base; to make the party, pre-eminently, the site of free debate and direct democracy; to encourage collective self-determination by the workers of the means and objectives of their struggle; to aim at the conquest of workers' power over the centres of production, not merely as an end in itself, but as the pre-figuration of social self-management by the sovereign producers.

In short, the new revolutionary party should define itself by its ability both to seize and wield central power (an ability which, by definition, broad movements and trade unions lack), and to destroy at its very roots the authoritarian nature of that central power. And those roots, of course, lie in the social division of labour. If the struggle against the employers and against the bourgeois State does not involve the experience and the exercise of workers' sovereignty, then neither will the emancipation of the working class follow any hypothetical conquest of the State by its party. If wage demands are not also aimed at changing working-class life—not merely living conditions, but the quality and nature of the whole culture—and at smashing the old inter-craft divisions and hierarchical structures, then the political, ideological and cultural hegemony of the working class on which its final emancipation depends will not have been advanced an inch.

A working class which is not sovereign in production will not be sovereign in society. A working class which is not master of its local destiny, i.e. of the conditions and organization of production, will never be a ruling class with mastery over the organization of society. A working class which does not exercise power over its own workplaces, by its control of the means of production, will never exercise power in society, even though its representatives may be masters of the State. A working class which has not freed itself from the hierarchical division of labour in each firm will never free itself from the social division of labour, even though the private ownership of the means of production may have been abolished. The progress of the working-class struggle for the power of self-determination in the centres of production contains more revolutionary promise, even where the firms still remain in private hands, than nationalizations which leave intact the hierarchical structure of the actual company. A working class which is master of the means of production, and which itself determines the technical division of labour, will of necessity demand power in the society at large and the abolition of the social division of labour.

On all these points the contribution of the student movement is immensely positive. The practice of collective debate, of direct democracy, of decision-making in free assembly, of student self-management, of egalitarianism, of the positive negation of all authority, etc all tie in with the libertarian tradition of the working class itself. It is not surprising that these features should serve as models for the latter, especially since the authoritarianism against which the students rebel indirectly reflects, on one particular level, the subordination of every area of social activity to the demands of monopoly capital.

The problem therefore: to construct a revolutionary party whose central organs, by their cohesion and capacity for political analysis, will prefigure the central power of the transitional period, without the party leadership claiming to control, direct or command the initiatives and movements that are born outside it, and that *are* the life-blood of the revolution. The hegemonic capacity of the party will be measured precisely by its capacity to enrich itself from movements born outside the party; to develop with them a common perspective while fully respecting their independence; and to become for them the centre of attraction, the pole of doctrinal reference, the main political outlet.

To put it another way, this new type of revolutionary party can no longer follow the Leninist model. It is no longer confronted by a despotic and repressive State, but by a State which is essentially political and which bases the legitimacy of its repressive actions on its ability to mediate politically between contradictory interests that are continually reduced to forms of ideological expression which make this mediation possible. And it is no longer confronted by a homogeneous upsurge of the popular forces against repression, but by a number of upsurges, all relatively distinct in their anti-capitalist aspirations, all pursuing at differentiated and specific levels a sovereign self-determination by social individuals of the conditions, ends, and framework of their social activity. It is impossible to demand immediate unification—by a line imposed from above—of all the various movements (of manual,

technical, scientific, artistic, cultural and other workers, etc) as a precondition for the frontal conquest of the State. It is only possible to articulate their specific aspirations within the perspective of a common goal which contains them all and at the same time transcends them: the goal of a socialist society, itself pluralist and 'articulated'. This is the society which the revolutionary party must prefigure in its methods and action if it wishes to fulfill its proper function. It must *disintegrate* the power of the political State while presenting itself as the mediating and synthesizing instrument for the independent centres of power which are struggling to emerge on all the various levels of civil society.

I shall return shortly to the question of whether the birth of a new type of revolutionary party presupposes the creation of a new revolutionary party.

6. The Student Revolt

The foregoing reflections would have only circumstantial significance if the revolutionary radicalism of young people was a purely conjunctural phenomenon, destined to burn itself out; if the categories and gradualist solutions of the traditional left were to remain valid or become valid anew.

But the fact is that the radicalization of the under-25 generation is a world phenomenon; its themes are similar throughout the whole of the advanced capitalist world; it is this which indicates that the character of the movement is fundamental, and not merely circumstantial. To denounce it as adventurist and irresponsible is completely to miss the point. The real irresponsibility is to present an unavowedly reductionist explanation and say: 'Basically these young people are revolting against their loss of class status; as children of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois parents, they are studying to enjoy the privileges of their class or to raise themselves in the social hierarchy. But the fact is that there are too many of them; there's no room for so many privileged people. So they will have to make do with the common lot.'

This interpretation, particularly widespread in West Germany and Great Britain, calculates on the old *ouvrierist* hostility towards intellectuals and students, seen as a privileged and idle section of society. The French working-class movement makes itself an accomplice to this primitive hostility, when it refuses to take into consideration the material base of the student revolt in order to bind the students to the working class and propose to both a model of civilization and development which would suppress the barriers between intellectual and manual work; which would make the right to culture universal because it would cease to confer privileges, because manual work would have the same dignity as intellectual work, because—as in China and in Cuba—everyone would be obliged periodically to do both.

In fact, the European working-class movement has the undeserved good fortune that the students, the secondary-school children, the young workers do not formulate their problems within the framework of bourgeois society in corporate, quantitative terms (of jobs available,

rates of increase, public credits, wage levels), but instead go right to the root of the problem. They radicalize to the left, demand the suppression of class barriers and elitist culture, and the onset of a universal (revolutionary) culture. They do not radicalize to the right through a demand for class privileges, through their rejection of proletarianization. The working-class movement, first by its indifference and then by its suspicion, insists that they *ought* to radicalize rightwards, and, if they do nothing of the sort, it is for accidental reasons in which no confidence should be placed.

In fact, if the student body radicalizes to the left, refuses elitism and cultural malthusianism at the same time as it refuses the technocratization of the university and bourgeois society, it is because there is no solution to the right: the students are trapped by the irrefutable logic of the cultural malthusianism of the bourgeoisie. If one accepts the capitalist criteria of efficiency and profit-earning capacity; if one accepts the bourgeois postulate that higher education—if it is not to be entirely wasted—must be the royal road to social and economic privilege; then it is certainly true that entry into higher education must be limited in the most draconian way: the university must be reserved for the future ruling elites, and the mass of young people sluiced off to schools producing experts on the cheap.

If, on the other hand, as the student movement demands, higher education should be open to all, then those who take it must renounce the least privilege in bourgeois society. They must renounce the capitalist criteria of efficiency and profit-earning capacity, the social division of labour, and all kinds of hierarchy. They must want culture for itself, independant of its utility. But at the same time they must desire a new kind of culture, a new type of society, a new scale of values. If the student vanguard, which formulates these demands theoretically, is followed by the general body, it is because the demands are not gratuitously extremist opinions, but a dialectical necessity which the general body experiences before expressing it in theoretical form.

For socialist and revolutionary theory, the question of culture as producer and product of the demand for a radical liberation appears in this light as the central question. Is it true that this question has remained unanswered in the socialist countries of Europe? That it was at the bottom of the present ferment in Czechoslovakia, and to a lesser degree in Poland and the Soviet Union? That it cannot be resolved by a mechanical transposition of Chinese and Cuban models? If this is the case, then the socialist forces must discover the guiding principles for an original model. After all, if parties aren't for that, they are for nothing.

7. The Way Forward

One of the great achievements of the May/June events is that for the first time in 35 years the question of revolution and of the passage to socialism has been posed in an advanced capitalist country, in terms of needs and criteria that owe nothing to the schemas which, since the 7th Congress of the Comintern, have dominated the politics and ideology of the Communist Parties. For the first time revolutionary

forces (still embryonic) have sketched in mass action the prospect of an 'affluent' socialism owing nothing to the Stalinist or post-Stalinist model which has been the more or less obligatory reference-point of the Marxist parties for the last 40 years.

Moreover, the question of the formation of a new revolutionary party capable of taking on the functions indicated above is now posed in France: one capable of defining a model of socialist democracy adapted to the demands—both cultural and for individual and collective liberation—of workers in an advanced country. Also, either in the short or the long term, the question of creating a new International—which would contain the independent revolutionary movements of the advanced capitalist countries and of the Third World—can only be avoided if what is left of the Third International ceases to be dominated by authoritarian and reformist tendencies, and declares itself open to all the varied revolutionary currents in the world.⁹

Change in the PCF, if it ever comes, will not be the result of an upsurge from the base: the apparat knows too well how to defend itself, by purges and administrative manipulations, from internal challenges. Such a development will come rather from some heavy external pressure that overwhelms the party at every level, including mass action, and that regroups all the revolutionary militants—for the most part unorganized—who emerged in May and June.

It matters little if the revolutionary groups in process of formation or development are not yet durable and coherent political entities, endowed with a hegemonic capacity. Every group devoted to action and theory—every group that gives itself the task of defining new forms of struggle; of defining the methods and objectives of dual power, particularly at the level of the big centres of production and the trusts; of defining the nature and sequence of middle-term objectives; of defining the economic and cultural policies of the transitional period—is at present the crucible from which the new party will emerge. The important thing for the moment is to provide a framework within which all those who have now learnt that revolution is possible—and that it must arise from initiative at the base, from the installation of forms of direct popular control, from exemplary acts of rupture which immediately take one outside the logic of the system and which have an efficacy vastly superior to traditional modes of propaganda and centralized organization—can be politically formed, can calculate their strength, and can exchange their experiences.

The new party will be born from the growth and combination of these nuclei because the need is there. The need is there because in the absence of a synthesizing group—which facilitates national and international liaison; prefigures revolutionary power and symbolizes its possibility; guarantees the translation into political power and governing capacity of a working class that takes over the means of production—the chances of eliminating and defeating the bourgeois State are tiny,

⁹ As Togliatti already demanded in his *Testament*, and as the Italian and Swedish Communist Parties attempt to achieve, for their part, on a national scale.

if indeed they exist at all. This does not mean that the new party will have to draw its strength from the power of its organization and its structures, but:

1. from the quality of its insertion into the centres of production and from its capacity to theorize the exercise of dual power, strategically, particularly on the level of the trusts, and of key sectors and services;
2. from the presence at its head of men unimpeachable in the eyes of revolutionaries of all tendencies: men with the moral authority, the abilities and the political credibility to proclaim, when the hour arrives, the provisional government of the revolution; to convene a general assembly of the committees of popular power; and, prior to the construction of the revolutionary State, to devise holding measures (economic, monetary, administrative, military) which will provisionally ensure a minimum of central organization and a maximum of security against sabotage or a return in force of the enemy.

In the event of any recurrence of a generalized pre-insurrectionary situation, the prior existence of a provisional structure of this kind will be indispensable for victory. Spontaneous insurrectionary situations, in an advanced and complex economy, cannot be prolonged sufficiently to allow for the creation and organization of a revolutionary vanguard on a mass scale, and of a political force capable of channelling the movement towards the seizure of power. The destiny of a revolution is settled in a few days, once the revolutionary moment has arrived. If these days are not made use of to dislocate the bourgeois State, neutralize its repressive apparatus and instal organs of popular power, the game will be lost—until the next occasion, which may well not arrive so soon. This is why a vanguard and a provisional political leadership, ready to make the most of any revolutionary situation, are indispensable.

Henceforward, we know that advanced capitalist society is vulnerable; that it is rent by contradictions which may explode into revolutionary crises; that the classic parties in their bankruptcy are not ideologically, politically or organizationally prepared to take advantage of these crises; that the essence of a revolutionary organization is to be ready for revolution, without advance notice. It is possible that the May uprising might recur, sooner or later, here or elsewhere, because the possibilities, under certain conditions, for its success have appeared so clearly that henceforward the power of the bourgeois State will have, as it were, an internal flaw.

But it is impossible, however, to rely solely on the return, *improbable in the short term*, of a spontaneous insurrection: just as they cannot be indefinitely prolonged, insurrectionary situations cannot be reproduced at will. The ability to make the most of a revolutionary situation when it arrives is only one of two eventualities for which a revolutionary organization has to prepare itself. The other eventuality is that of a long process, which must be utilized for political preparation in depth, and for actions of partial rupture, spaced out in time. This preparation and these actions include the constant repetition, by active minorities—of whom the SDS in West Germany has been the first to set the example—of insurrectionary acts of a symbolic and exemplary kind. These are the

best means of propagating revolutionary ideas; of destroying fear and respect for 'authority'; of revealing the limits, the insoluble contradictions, the blockages, the repressive nature and the absurdities of the existing social system; and of teaching contempt for that system. But these acts are not the insurrection itself; they will not get the better of the social system; they simply maintain areas of crisis within it which undermine its political credibility. They are one particular mode of preparatory political work; they presuppose the latter, win a wider receptivity for it, and need to be followed up by it.

July 12th, 1968

Erratum

In NLR 51 the Introduction to Gramsci 1919-20 was preceded on the contents page by the initials P.A. This was an editorial error: we apologize for the misattribution.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are due to *Les Temps Modernes* for permission to publish the articles by Ernest Mandel, Jean-Marie Vincent and André Gorz, which appeared in its special issue for August/September 1968. The Original title of André Glucksmann's book was *Stratégie et Révolution en France 1968*, and it was published in France by Christian Bourgois.

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Strategy and Revolution in France 1968

An Introduction

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the 18th century, storm swiftly from success to success; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliance; ecstasy is the everyday spirit; but they are short lived; soon they have obtained their zenith, and a long capulent depression lays hold of society before it learns soberly to assimilate the results of its storm-and-stress period. On the other hand, proletarian revolutions, like those of the 19th century, criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts, seem to throw down their adversary only in order that he may draw new strength from the earth and rise again, more gigantic, before them, recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims, until a situation has been created which makes all turning back impossible, and the conditions themselves cry out: '*Hic Rhodus, hic saltus!*' C'est ici qu'est la rose, c'est ici qu'il faut danser!

Karl Marx: *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*¹

The 'May Revolution' only exists in its iconography. The barricades were not military strongholds but the elements of a test. Excluded from official calculations, the spectre of revolution demonstrated in the streets that it still haunts Europe.

A first reckoning. In France, at the end of May, on one side there were 10 million strikers holding all the vital centres of the economy, of the administration and of

political, cultural and social life; on the other, two hundred thousand men in the forces of order and a few civilian networks.² The test provoked a crisis.

The gravity of a political crisis becomes clear when the main actors have to settle on their conduct under the threat of an imminent confrontation, in which 'fighting is a trial of moral and physical force by means of the latter'. Faced with this brutal choice, each actor reveals his basic strategy, whether of evasion or of struggle. The possible confrontation becomes the touch-stone for each actor's intentions; 'the combat is the only effective activity . . . even when the combat does not actually take place.'³

The test functioned a second time, when the material balance of forces swung so strongly in favour of the strikers that it laid bare the balance of political forces. Those who were revolutionary on paper showed clearly that they were in reality more conservative than any moderate 'reformists'; their actions made possible an assessment of the true intentions of the Communist leadership; the balance of political forces was inverted.

For a new test, a new reckoning. The strike movement had brought government within reach of the opposition: the latter's response was a refusal. The electors ratified its self-imposed sentence. They voted on the question posed in May, which the opposition parties were incapable of formulating or resolving—the question of the State.

It was logical that they should conclude: 'the existing State rather than nothing'. But what was this nothing? Was it 10 million strikers and the revolutionary situation they revealed, or was it rather the parliamentary opposition which concealed it?

*

The barricades did not magically pervert a hitherto harmonious France. They merely revealed the battlefield which France was, is and remains. It is common knowledge: no political régime has been installed other than by violence, even when—after the event—it has taken care to legalize itself by organizing elections (de Gaulle in May 1958).

To define a political situation as a battlefield implies that the armies

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: *Selected Works in Two Volumes*, Moscow 1962, Vol. I, pp. 250–251.

² *The Observer*, which no-one can suspect of extremist leanings, reckoned (June 2nd 1968):

—Police under the control of the Ministry of the Interior: 83,000 men including 13,500 CRS.

—National gendarmes responsible to the Minister of the Armed Forces: 61,000 men, a majority of them allocated to provinces and untransferrable. Including particularly a special ('red') section of 16,000 men with tanks and armoured cars. Also 7,000 reserves called up by the Government at the end of May.

—The Army: 168,000 men, 120,000 of them conscripts ill-disposed to a *coup de force*.

³ Carl von Clausewitz: *On War*, trans. J. J. Graham, 1966, Vol. I, pp. 84 and 40. This closed field in which any project can be brought before the tribunal of the trial of strength is defined by the theory of strategic games as a *matrix* imposed on everyone, whatever any of them may imagine.

exist—political and social groups in confrontation. This does not necessarily mean that battle is imminent, nor that one of the two armies or both are ready for combat. The opponents may make a truce—electoral or otherwise—and negotiate a peace: it will either be based on the ruse of one camp (which is trying to gain time) and the illusion of the other, on the illusions of both, or on a balance of forces. The last may be provisional or more permanent.

To decide between these different possibilities we must know who is fighting—the camps in the field—and why they are fighting—the stake.

The May struggles unfolded on two planes, over two stakes. On the one hand, there was the political struggle for power, opposing the 'right', or Gaullism, and the 'left'. On the other hand, there was the class struggle, opposing revolution and counter-revolution.

To interpret the images of May, they must be divided.

I The Return of the Revolution

The Bomb, Gold, the State: on these three rocks, the Western World has built its first convictions and its ultimate faith. It took only six months to shatter the vanity and fragility of a society prostrate before the fetishes that define it as bourgeois.

Act I The greatest industrial power loses the war in Vietnam despite its thermo-nuclear arsenal. It believed that it has the 'absolute' weapon. Its dream has worn thin.

Act II The monetary crisis paralyses the capitalist metropolises, and the spectre of an economic crisis stalks.

Act III The best-policed State in the West staggers; Europe, stupefied, discovers that the revolution is possible once again.

The possible revolution is also the risk of a counter-revolution, it is yet again an unstable balance hovering between these two futures. Since 1945, Europe's fate had been decided over its head, settled between Washington and Moscow, shaken only by colonial peoples. Today history is knocking at our door, the Movement of May and June 1968 in France has taken its grip on the course of world events. The French revolution will be decided in France, the European revolution will be the work of Europe itself. This has not always been the case.

*

1848–1968: *The Communist Manifesto* was the programme for a decisive battle that seemed about to begin. That modern societies are internally—economically—ripe for a socialist revolution is the prime axiom of the great theoreticians of Marxism. The furious conflagration of the May strike confirms that a single spark can start a prairie fire. The essential safety-catch had for a century been an international one; the European powers contained internal revolutionary pressure by their competition and their wars, even more than by their Holy Alliance.

Marx showed how revolutions in the mid 19th century were blocked throughout the European continent: the armed intervention of Tsarist Russia, 'the gendarme of Europe', plus the conservative aims of England, 'the despot of the world market'. Later, Stalin became the ogre of 20th-century Europe and furnished the reason for a division that paralysed the workers' movement, while the USA succeeded England in the imperial role as guardian of order. Meanwhile, two revolutions might have undertaken to realize the Marxist programme; but Bismarck returned Thiers' prisoners as fresh troops to crush the Paris Commune (1871), just as Foch lent his machine-guns to the German Army to crush the Spartakist Communists (1918). The weakening of this international restraint has produced a new situation today.

In 1968, it was the students' privilege to reveal that no foreign power could intervene directly—militarily—in the class struggles in France.⁴ De Gaulle had himself estranged the USA, blocked anyway by its military and economic problems; the USSR, prey to the Fronde of the people's democracies, no longer represents a credible threat of intervention. Whatever the ideological and political pressures on the forces pitted against one another in France, the physical relation of these forces remains a purely internal one. The Popular Front was influenced and restrained by the demands of national defence (the Franco-Russian alliance against Hitler), and then broken by the Spanish Civil War and the Munich Agreement. At present, everything at stake in France is decided in a neutralized military space; no foreign power can act physically to alter a relation of forces decided within the national frontiers. For the first time for more than a century, Marx's formula is true again in Western Europe, and the revolutionary struggle may be national in form (not nationalist in content): 'The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie'.⁵

*

The May movement revealed the *nation-wide crisis* tormenting France: not the revolution itself but the terrain which made it possible. 'Only when the "lower classes" do not want the old way and when the "upper classes" cannot carry on in the old way—only then can revolution triumph'.⁶ While 10 million strikers, the 'lower classes', launched a movement of a breadth unequalled in the history of the French workers' movement, the political crisis raged among the 'upper classes', the police brutality shocked average public opinion, and the first official statements, far from coping with the demands of the street, multiplied them. For three days (Tuesday 28th to Thursday 30th May), France no longer knew if it had a government, all the press examined alternative

⁴ Not all the students, obviously, but the political force called 'the students', which alone ruled the universities and unleashed the May movement. A political force is defined strategically, not statically—the 40,000 Parisian students who demonstrated in May really were 'the' students because no other student force could have opposed them.

⁵ *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 45.

⁶ V. I. Lenin: *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, Moscow n.d., Vol. III, p. 430.

solutions, the parliamentary opposition declared its readiness to form a provisional government.

The physical inferiority of the forces of order was extreme, their morale low; the strike had only to hold, the demonstrations to continue and State power would have collapsed. De Gaulle's second speech (May 30th) seemed to restore the situation, but in fact it revealed it: State power was not relying on its own too feeble strength, but on the weakness of the opposing camp. The 'left' proved its absence of will, and politics abhors a vacuum. On May 13th 1958, de Gaulle had conquered France in the name of order. Ten years later, the opposition could, but would not, repeat the operation to its own advantage; instead of an inverted May 13th we should have had a repeated May 13th. De Gaulle—Titan—found his feet once again on the ground that sustains his power: not the forces of order, but the fear of disorder; like a phoenix, the Gaullist régime was reborn immaculate, through the impotence of the parliamentary opposition.

The workers and students had power in their hands, they found no organized force to which to entrust it. A nation-wide crisis becomes a revolution, Lenin goes on, when the masses in movement can force their leaders to fight, leaders who '*are afraid of their own victory*'.⁷ The May movement, despite the weakness of its opponent, was blocked in its rise to revolution; the parties and trade unions wanted none of it—lack of a revolutionary organization; the striking workers made no use of the power they held, and seeing the hesitations of their leaders some began to be afraid of victory, since they did not know what to do with it—lack of a revolutionary theory.

The field of battle, the nation-wide crisis, was favourable, but the Communist Party only joined the battle to keep possession of its arms, not to open the road to socialism—it left the strikers in the lurch, sounding the retreat before the fight began. The two conditions for the transformation of a nation-wide crisis into a revolution were lacking: no revolutionary organization, no general theory co-ordinated the struggle on a national scale.

At the beginning, the student movement, expanded to include the young workers, replaced the vanguard organization; its forms of extra-parliamentary action took the place of a strategy. The importance of the student 'detonator' seems miraculous to whoever cannot spot the tripwire that could unleash a chain reaction in French society as a whole. It took the (empty) place of revolutionary organization and theory; it played its part within the limits of its possibilities. The May movement suggests the perspectives of a revolutionary strategy for the second half of the 20th century in the 'advanced' capitalist countries.

Spartacus began his epic with 70 slaves. They established themselves on the slopes of Vesuvius; at night the volcano's fire, in the day its smoke, proclaimed from afar the advent of an unprecedented revolt. Later, arriving within sight of Rome, Spartacus' army was immobilized: the

⁷ Ibid., p. 431.

world capital was almost defenceless, but the slaves did not dare take it, the collapse began.⁸ The Sorbonne, occupied by revolutionary students, symbolizes Rome conquered from within: the intellectual citadel has opened, the ghetto of the workers' suburbs may begin to move, if the encounter takes place this place will be called revolution. An 'independent movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority',⁹ the May movement doubly awakened society: by violence and by speech.

*

The barricade was not a means to invest Paris militarily, it was a political instrument. 'Even in the classic time of street fighting, the barricade produced more of a moral than a material effect. It was a means of shaking the steadfastness of the military. If it held out until this was attained, victory was won; if not, there was defeat.'¹⁰ The first night of the barricades (Friday May 10th) did not break the 'steadfastness' of the police and the government, but it conquered Paris politically, and inaugurated the first day of general strike that the Fifth Republic has seen. The savagery of the police repression was one reason the students were not mere victims, but combatants; they defended themselves, and admiration was added to compassion. In France it is not the gendarme in person who rules, but fear of the gendarme, and infectious courage shattered the fear that bound society together. 'Not only the State, but the citizens of the State, too, had to be revolutionized. His Majesty's subjects could only acquire a new skin in a bloody fight for liberation.'¹¹ The barricades were defensive, never offensive, but the repression was bloody because by *bolding out* the demonstrators refused to be subjected by fear, and remain the subjects of State power.¹² In a society ripe for revolution, the State's arms are not its strength—

⁸ 'The Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies must seize power not for the purpose of building an ordinary bourgeois republic, nor for the purpose of immediate transition to socialism. This cannot be. What, then, is the purpose? The Soviets must seize power in order to take the first concrete steps towards this transition, steps that can and should be made. In this respect fear is the main enemy.' (Lenin, May 1917, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 106).

⁹ Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 44.

¹⁰ Engels in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 131-132.

¹¹ Engels.

¹² As a political instrument, the barricades revealed the determination of the demonstrators and the repressive intentions of the State: it was an 'exemplary action': 'once a tacitly but not legally acknowledged lock has been broken open, it becomes an exemplary action' (March 22nd Movement: *Ce n'est qu'un début, continuons le combat*, Maspéro). Hence the political value of the barricade varies as a function of the political situation: 'it is not the barricade itself which is exemplary, but what it reveals' (Ibid.).

The immediate military superiority of the forces of order was crushing. However, the first barricades in the Latin Quarter and the fights of the workers at Peugeot and Renault-Flins did measure a relation of forces: the 'exemplary' value of these confrontations lay (1) in their mobilization of anti-repressive forces throughout France; (2) in their immediate proof that these political forces could be transformed into material forces.

According to the political situation, the *current* superiority of the repressive forces can be restricted, balanced or dominated by the *potential* superiority of the revolutionary forces. What tempers the repression is not kindness but prudence; the barricades had forced the authorities to manipulate gingerly this miniature model of a possible type of revolution: 'I can no longer assert as definitively as I did in 1902', said Kautsky in 1907, 'that armed uprisings and barricade fighting will not play the decisive part in the coming revolutions. Too clear evidence to the contrary is provided

it has none—but the fear that makes it appear strong and the distrust with which it divides its opponents. Hence courage, breaking the architecture of fear, becomes a superb political instrument; as does freedom of speech, which extinguishes distrust. The power to say anything that reigned in a Sorbonne where 'prohibition is prohibited' was universal equality in words. The humorist may say that much that was said said nothing; he is right but short-sighted. One of our age's most onerous privileges lies in that use of language whereby classes and class fractions are distinguished. Each caste of French society possesses its specialized jargon, transforming it into a closed universe: its members are accomplices among themselves, exclusive of everyone else; words have become frontier posts. The abolition of privilege demands the destruction of linguistic segregation; the flood of words that invaded the Sorbonne evokes the night of August 4th, as well as the first Russian Soviets.

Distrust does not only maintain the distances between the different elements of a revolutionary explosion. It also separates today and tomorrow. A class is afraid of its own victory so long as it has no experience of its autonomous strength, so long as it envisages its 'victory' solely as a change of the men in power, the transition from one master to another, and not as mastery over all governmental personnel. An exchange of definitive 56-point programmes does nothing to alter this initial dread; only action, common discussion of this action, and its organization, glimpse the possibility of a mastery of events. Hence the remarkable transformation of the Sorbonne speeches: in a few weeks, from ideal, the word became practical and political; from private, public.

At the beginning, the 'general meetings' were absorbed in the enjoyment of their own freedom: discussion of the powers of the chairman of a session chaired the session; freedom of speech was tested by the freedom to say anything, and experienced in speeches on the freedom of speech. Against the background of this freedom, as permanent in the demonstrations as in the meetings, 'orators' appeared, leaders as spokesmen, drawing their only authority from the words they spoke and the actions they proposed. The constant possibility of interruption and rejection in a meeting frees political speech, far from destroying it. (This thesis is classical: it was contestation and living democracy which produced the great orators in Athens, in 1789, in the Russian Soviets, and so on.) Double meeting points, between students and workers, between today and tomorrow, the faculties began to co-ordinate the action while speech busied itself in the formulation of that 'latent socialism'¹³ that society conceals beneath its shell of fear and distrust.

by the experience of the street battles in Moscow, when a handful of men held up a whole army for a week in barricade fighting, and would almost have gained the victory, had not the failure of the revolutionary movement in other cities made it possible to dispatch such reinforcements to the army that in the end a monstrously superior force was concentrated against the insurgents. Of course, this relative success of the struggle on the barricades was possible only because the city population energetically supported the revolutionaries, while the troops were completely demoralized. But who can affirm with certainty that something similar is impossible in Western Europe?' (Kautsky, cit. Lenin: *Collected Works*, Moscow 1962, Vol. 15, pp. 59-60).

¹³ Engels.

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'No programme, no programme': from the very first day the 'serious-minded' sirens refuted a revolutionary movement that permitted itself demonstrations without first posting up the five-year plan it would carry out once popular power had been established. Hence the general amazement at the sight of the most far-reaching upheaval of the society since the Popular Front. It was not made in the name of electoral programmes duly countersigned by the 'responsible' organizations—the latter, completely absorbed in dotting the i's in the said programmes, were the most surprised. In place of a programme, the events administered a number of lessons which were only unexpected for the politicians who find it politic to ignore them.

Firstly, the lack of a detailed central programme is not a hindrance at the beginning of an authentically revolutionary movement. The phenomenon of '*cabiers de doléances*' recurs in all sectors; initiative replaces dirigism; invention is substituted for obedience. May saw emerge more projects of transformation established by the workers themselves than the experts had worked out in a decade. This kind of absence of programme is merely a concession to what the Marxist classics call 'the initiative of the masses'. It proves the presence of a desire for transformation growing in the France of 1968 as in that of 1788.

Secondly, the content of a programme depends above all on the State power that will carry it out. It is not just a question of knowing which political party will govern, but what form will the power take: centralized or not, bourgeois or not. When Marx glorified the Commune and analysed in it 'the most glorious deed of our Party', he was not referring to the Commune's 'programme', since this was totally confused and hardly socialist, but to its existence and actions: 'the great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence'.¹⁴ The young revolutionaries were reproached with not having said before undertaking a long struggle what would happen when it ended. A thesis should be stamped on the serious brows knit over the 'anarchism' of the young, a thesis not written by an anarchist: 'Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes.'¹⁵

Thirdly,—if a programme limited to a description of the results of a revolution is inadequate; if on the contrary it is essential to decide on the path and the tasks that lead to this revolution; if it is understood that a programme is a strategic plan;
—if it is reckoned absurd to tie one's plans to the tail of a comet so as to rise to the 'American challenge' around AD 2000; if it is no longer satisfactory to pasture the fat kine of socialism in the green meadows of electoral dreams;
—if Lenin was right not to confuse the electoral poster and the revolutionary programme: 'Marx's theory has elucidated the real task of a revolutionary socialist party, which is not to invent plans for the reorganization of society, to preach to the capitalists and their lackeys the improvement of the workers' lot, or to hatch plots, but to organize

¹⁴ Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 527.

¹⁵ Marx in *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 16.

the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle whose ultimate aim is the conquest of political power by the proletariat and the organization of socialist society';¹⁶ then perhaps we shall be able to discover in the movement that came to life in May 1968 the strategic perspective of the revolution incubating in Europe today, and, confronting it, the threat of a counter-revolution.

The balance of these two possibilities provisionally maintains a terrified society that, until May 1968, thought itself eternal.

II The Three Operational Theatres

A few barricades defended a small area in the Latin Quarter one Friday evening, and the whole society found itself face to face with its political and social destiny. The enormous disproportion between the 'cause' and the 'effect' is obscured rather than explained if we are satisfied to denote the student movement as 'revelatory'. Revelatory of what? How could an action whose 'violence' was restricted to the disruption of traffic in five Paris streets upset the State and convulse the society? We must be able to extend our astonishment; more astonishing than the students is this 'adult' world, supposedly unshakable and so easily shaken.

The spark of student violence fell in an inflammable situation that latently pre-existed and still survives, the sole battlefield on which are simultaneously posed the question of the political régime and the question of the social régime.

'In France rage has become an infectious disease'.¹⁷ The violence, initially student violence, then general violence, was:

1. immediately effective in its form: far from being foreign to normal political action, it is inevitable;
2. restricted and blocked in its effects by the opposition political parties—particularly the PCF—who preferred perpetual impotence *vis-à-vis* the State to the seizure of power;
3. eventually effective, in its content, in which a latent revolutionary situation could be discerned.

Violent Politics

The violence of words and demonstrations began in the amphitheatres and in the streets; it was 'extra-parliamentary'. If the deputies' speeches did not affect it, its infectiousness, on the contrary, was enough to dissolve parliament. Only he who is stupid enough to confuse political life and parliamentary life can imagine that 'violence' violated the peaceful 'political debate'. When it abandons the realm of verbal declaration to define itself in the world of relations of force, politics is not at all unfaithful to itself, it simply becomes serious.

The ultimate, but permanent possibility of the use of physical violence

¹⁶ Lenin.

¹⁷ Cohn-Bendit.

defines the play of political forces in its specificity. No politics without a horizon of violence: all classical ('bourgeois') political philosophy affirms this, contemporary political practice confirms it, and on this point Marxism makes no innovation, defining as it does political life by the (class) *struggle*.

I might here appeal to Mao Tse-tung (political power grows out of the barrel of a gun),¹⁸ but it is enough to refer to Max Weber, a perfectly respectable writer, hardly suspected of extremism, and one who is taught at the Sorbonne: 'one can define the modern state sociologically only in terms of the specific *means* peculiar to it, as to every political grouping, namely, the use of physical force. "Every State is founded on force," said Trotsky at Brest-Litovsk. That is indeed right.'

On the horizon of all dialogue, the modern State maintains its strength; 'it (successfully) claims a *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force*.'¹⁹ If it breaks off its dialogue with those it has decided to regard as 'non-representative', it leaves no choice but that between the silence of acquiescence and violent rejection. The demonstrators—peasant cultivators, workers or students—have drawn identical lessons from the 'especially intimate relationship between the State and violence today':

1. Whoever contests the State, whatever the issue, *exposes* his own body to the effects of this 'especially intimate relationship';
2. Whoever *exposes* himself to the State's 'legitimate' violence must be sure of a popular support which will restrain the State and its violence;

Only courage can sustain the proposition that follows logically:

3. Whoever publicly *seeks* popular support against the State *exposes* himself once again to the consequences of the famous 'especially intimate relationship';

And, in its turn, only intelligence can conclude:

4. Whoever contests must be able to utilize the 'legitimate' repression of the State to *assure* himself a popular echo until the State is forced either to abandon repression or to lose its legitimacy in the eyes of those who support it or suffer it.

'Extra-parliamentary' violence is doubly necessary in this context, because it is doubly political. It is the precondition for a dialogue with the State—forced to recognize as a 'valid interlocutor' whoever it cannot suppress physically; it is an effective dialogue with the population, in order to obtain reinforcements from other political sectors.

The principle of this violence is as old as the parliamentary régime itself. The majority of social reforms have been introduced by it, then ratified by the parliamentary representatives; once its victory is total, a change of régime follows. De Gaulle provided the last example when he took power in 1958. Limiting Pflimlin to the alternatives of resignation or a fight with the French Army in a state of insurrection,

¹⁸ Mao Tse-tung: *Selected Works*, Peking 1965, Vol. II, p. 224.

¹⁹ Max Weber: 'Politics as a Vocation', in Gerth and Mills, eds., *Essays from Max Weber*, London 1947, pp. 77–78.

de Gaulle acted no differently than did the students on the barricades the workers of Flins or Peugeot: either the forces of order abandon the field, or they use force with the political consequences that that implies

Exchange of ideas—yes, exchange of blows—no, sententiously pronounces every authority, not without reserving for itself alone the power to fix the dividing line. What new idea, what daring demand what embryonic form of expression has not been felt as a blow? Only received ideas find an easy reception.

The State exercises the monopoly of physical violence and claims thereby the exorbitant privilege of distinguishing what belongs to the commerce of ideas and what constitutes an exchange of blows. With the pretext of protecting the freedom of pure ideas, it gives itself the freedom to define what is an idea and what is not. Monopolizing the use of force, and thereby determining the use of ideas, the State always proclaims in the last analysis: 'I am the only philosopher'.

If this monopoly of physical force was not only a legal claim but an absolute fact, it would only leave room for a State monologue. Extra-parliamentary violence is always a dialogue, it becomes the only dialogue possible when the will to be heard is opposed by a determination not to listen.

'The habit of violence' does not bring with it fascism, as sins do the Devil, but the inability to use violence becomes impotence before fascism. Whoever prefers to ignore this has not read Brecht or Lenin, or even Machiavelli and all political thought since politics has been thought.

This inevitable violence is inscribed in two kinds of conflict: the traditional political game that represses it, the revolutionary situation that prolongs it.

Politics in a Vice

Extra-parliamentary violence collides directly with the State apparatus whose repressive monopoly it calls into question. The opposition parties had to choose between it and the safety of the State as it is. Half-heartedly, they tried evasion, as if it were enough to hesitate between two camps to become the arbiter. They found that they were impotent.

The role of the Communist Party was a signal one. It constantly insisted on separating the social and the governmental, the struggle for the workers' demands and its inevitable political significance. Imposing an end on the strike in the name of elections, it blocked social agitation with the parliamentary game. But a block is not a solution and the Communist Party rediscovered the characteristic contradiction between its Marxist civil status and its parliamentary 'maturity', between its placard of revolutionary principles and its moderate and fruitless real action. A situation all the more difficult in that in two months the political blocking mechanism revealed all its secrets.

In the first three weeks of May the demonstrations, strikes and factory occupations brought the régime into crisis. From then on, the extra-parliamentary violence remained the horizon of the political crisis. The opposition parties bore rather than exploited this violence; they refused basically to accept its logic and, as they did not wish to pass from a nation-wide crisis to a revolutionary situation, they gave in. The retreat was masked, the pretext for it was the need for an end to the strikes so as to allow the elections, or the lack of preparation and unity (not even a governmental programme common to all the Left). These arguments allow us to glimpse what aroused this discomfiture: not the strength of the enemy, but a rejection of the tasks that a revolution implies.

At the beginning, the government appealed to the authority of the State; the opposition parties, strengthened by the authority of the strikes, demanded a 'popular government'. Parliament was out of action, the official government had obtained a small majority on May 22nd, it would probably not have mustered it again a week later (Giscard-d'Estaing had demanded the dismissal of the Prime Minister).

De Gaulle's threats were as firm as the means he had to carry them out were fragile. The counter-threat of the opposition was non-existent, while it disposed of the supreme power: to continue the strike, blocking all political and economic activity.

The elections were a pretext. The opposition could quite easily have answered the Head of State by saying that it accepted them in principle, provided that the conditions were discussed (the electoral procedure, the constituency boundaries fixed by the government to its own advantage for several years now, the intervention of the State in the electoral campaign, etc). While the strikes went on, it was in a position of strength and could demand impartial elections and contest a partial government.

The lack of a governmental programme common to all the opposition goes to the heart of the matter. The parties of the Left and extreme Left were not, in fact, prepared—or did not want—to seize power, not because they lacked a programme, but because they were looking for one. No seizure of power has ever been achieved by posting a quinquennial proclamation.

Historical transformations are, depending on the case, made in the name of the popular will, of force, or of empty principles and phrases. But the detailed government programme is worked out in contact with realities; it follows the accession to power, it does not precede it. In an emergency, to waste time turning out your pockets under the guise of looking for a programme shows that you do not know what to do with your hands. Every country in its time presents this tragicomic spectacle; in France it has a particular flavour thanks to the very overtly centralized nature of the State.

The French Republic still remains today an 'empire without an emperor'²⁰; the infinite ramifications of its apparatus, its monarchical

²⁰ Engels.

centralization, its powers of intervention, have lasted since Richelieu and Napoleon. This apparatus has served various interests; modernized it retains its dirigism. The politician who undertakes to give details of what use he proposes to make of it finds himself under the painful obligation to tell each citizen what he will be doing in five years time. This art has more to do with astrology than with politics. Even when they are opposed to a third, it is rare for two astrologers to make identical forecasts, even rarer for them to be listened to seriously.²¹

Through the power condensed in it, the State is the 'apple of discord'²² of French politics. With their disputes over a programme, the Left shared the discord before securing the apple. De Gaulle only had to reach out his hand.

May disclosed what they wanted to ignore, a daring France, socially pre-revolutionary. June rediscovered a country politically much more bourgeois, conservative, traditional. A barrier separated the social and the political: the stake of the political struggle (the use of the State as it is) did not correspond to the stake in the social struggle (different society). As society is managed by the State, the State introduced self-management: the stronger and more centralized it is, the more it must be inhabited by a single will, and the more this will is (auto-) conservative.

In the official political game, accepted by the parliamentary opposition, society no longer controls the State, the State imposes its own principles on society; 'general rules that one prescribes for others so as to conserve for oneself more freedom of action'.²³ In the elaboration of its

²¹ 'That huge governmental machinery, entailing like a boa constrictor the real social body in the ubiquitous meshes of a standing army, hierarchical bureaucracy, an obedient police, clergy and a servile magistrature, was first forged in the days of absolute monarchy as a weapon of nascent middle-class society in its struggles of emancipation from feudalism. The first French Revolution with its task to give full scope to the free development of modern middle-class society had to sweep away all the local, territorial, townish and provincial strongholds of feudalism, prepared the social soil for the superstructure of a centralized statepower, with omnipresent organs ramified after the plan of a systematic and hierarchic division of labour.

'But the working class cannot simply lay hold on the ready-made state-machinery and wield it for their own purpose. The political instrument of their enslavement cannot serve as the political instrument of their emancipation.

'The modern bourgeois state is embodied in two great organs, parliament and the government. Parliamentary omnipotence had, during the period of the party of order republic, from 1848 to 1851 engendered its own negative—the Second Empire—and Imperialism, with its mockery of parliament, is the régime now flourishing in most of the great military states of the continent. At first view, apparently, the usurpatory dictatorship of the governmental body over society itself, rising alike above and humbling alike all classes, it has in fact, on the European continent at least, become the only possible stateform in which the appropriating class can continue to sway it over the producing class. The assembly of the ghosts of all the defunct French parliaments which still haunts Versailles wields no real force save the governmental machinery as shaped by the Second Empire.' (Karl Marx, 'Second Draft (Vtoroi Nabrosok) of the Civil War in France', *Arkhiv Marks i Engels'sa*, Vol. III (VIII), 1934, pp. 414 and 416—the English is Marx's own.)

²² Marx in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 517; where the English version has 'bone of contention', continental editions have 'apple of discord'—*Translator's note*.

²³ Marx.

programmes, the Left presupposes the State, while the State, the empire without an emperor, presupposes a saviour of order, an uncrowned emperor. Intent on drawing up its little documents, the opposition provides the rods with which it will one day be beaten.

For an easily manipulated public opinion, so long as there is no crisis, a new State programme is needless, everything is in order. When the crisis breaks out, the State is the sole programme: order must be preserved—without it 'the Left itself could not carry out its programme'. So long as the present State is not overhauled from top to bottom, the slightest crisis will provoke the re-emergence of a strong man. France has rarely been short of them: it is not they who make the State, the State produces them.

The political opponent of the May movements, the opponent who has paralysed the parties of the Left and extreme Left for decades, is not an individual who could be countered by the publication of an electoral manifesto, nor the so-called 'affluent society' and the apparent 'depoliticization of the masses'—but rather the depoliticization of society by the State.

Whoever leaves all power concentrated in the hands of the State gives in to an eternal blackmail: to save the State is to save Order, to reinforce the State is to reinforce whoever holds State power here and now. By making the streets, factories and universities the sites of political life, the movement born in May brought repoliticization and destatification to the fore; this led, not to a change in political programme, but to a convulsion in the very nature of power, consequently to a revolution. The 'parody' of Napoleon III's Empire, remarked Marx, 'was necessary to free the mass of the French nation from the weight of tradition and to work out in pure form the opposition between the State power and the society.' (1852).²⁴ The Empire was followed by the Paris Commune, not by a parliamentary republic.²⁵

²⁴ Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 340.

²⁵ The idea of a necessary or logical progression from an authoritarian régime to a parliamentary régime and thence to socialism—the 'parliamentary road' to socialism—is so foreign to Marx that he regards the reverse course as much more conceivable, from parliamentarism to an authoritarian régime and then to a socialist revolution. From the parliamentary republic of 1848 to the Empire of Napoleon III, from the latter to the Commune, 'the cycles of political forms were only the political expression of the real changes society underwent' ('Second Draft of the Civil War in France,' *op. cit.*, p. 428). Or *vice versa*, the development of bourgeois society corresponds to a reinforcement of the repressive State, not of democracy:

'But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still journeying through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December and 1851, it had completed one half of its preparatory work; it is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it perfects the *executive power*, reduces it to its purest expression, isolates it, sets it up against itself as the sole target, in order to concentrate all its forces of destruction against it. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from its seat and exultantly exclaim: Well Grubbed, old mole!' (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1852).

From the Fourth to the Fifth, but not from the Fifth to bourgeois parliamentary democracy.

'Finally, in its struggle against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive powers, the resources and

The opposition failed to take power because it did not want to act; claimed that it was condemned to inaction because it had no programme. From the streets, the workers offered it power; it preferred to stay indoors discussing what it would do later, without leaving those who gave it the power today the job of deciding about that tomorrow. Power, surprised, passed under the windows and went away, slighted,

A century ago, Marx mentioned 'that peculiar malady . . . which holds those infected by it fast in an imaginary world and robs them of a sense, all memory and all understanding of the rude external world.' The classification of this new symptom of *parliamentary cretinism* spans no one the necessity of interrogating the causes of the malady. Aiming for power, the parliamentary opposition encouraged the revolution recoiling before the revolution, it gave in to order. In both cases, could not put through its programme behind the State's back: it expected to support the State when it vacillates, and to keep quiet once the State no longer needs it. The notorious depoliticization is in fact a deparliamentarianization of the people, 'convinced . . . that the time are past when the cackle of geese could save the Capitol'.²⁷

The Lightning of Revolution

The revolution surprises: its opponents, its partisans, its spectators, are amazed. It 'bursts' like a 'thunderclap' or an 'electric spark'.²⁸ It was foreseen neither at this time nor in this place, it was no longer expected.

If a revolution takes its time, its outbreaks are dispersed and surprise attempts a recovery. Student riots—strikes, workers' demands, political crisis—elections: official thought scatters the aspects of one single situation and refuses to add them together. The violence that has abruptly emerged it judges 'abnormal'; it explains it from the point of view of 'normal' society, peaceful and organized at bottom, but fissured by mere accidents that a few reforms will abolish. However, once all the demands are gathered together, they constitute a blast that only a revolution can satisfy. Is this Utopia?

It is unanimously concluded that the spirit of revolution floats above the stagnant waters of a non-revolutionary 'objective situation'. Political statistics seemed to confirm this; the majority of parties have not posted revolution in their programmes. Social statistics make their contribution: students are by birth petty bourgeois, and when they preach revolution and are denounced (as 'leftists') by working-class organizations, they can only be representing themselves, not the working class. But without the latter, we know that no revolution is possible.

centralization of governmental power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor' (Ibid. p. 333).

²⁶ Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 308.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 251.

²⁸ Marx: 'Second Draft of the Civil War in France,' *op. cit.*, pp. 400 and 412.

The tedium of such a description lies in the fact that it is just as true today as it was yesterday. The students were of petty bourgeois birth, and 'cut off from the working class', on May 13th as well as on May 29th; they were the originators of a general strike nonetheless. The political parties had not changed their statutes on Wednesday May 29th, but no one could any longer guarantee their legalism, for no one knew any longer where legality lay. Descriptions, polls, statistics and journalism merely skimmed the *manifest* society, whereas the revolution revealed a *latent* society abruptly emerging: 'It is the great significance of all crises that they reveal what is hidden; they cast aside all that is conventional, superficial or petty; they sweep away the political garbage, and expose the real mainsprings of the actual class struggle.'²⁹

The disease incubating in an officially peaceful society only appears—like neuroses in individuals—in a period of crisis. In the interval, the work of the revolution remains hidden; galleries are tunnelled beneath the peaceful surface without it being possible to establish a general picture of them. Only the examination of a crisis enables us to exclaim with Marx, 'Well grubbed, old mole!'; only the crisis reveals the 'objective situation' of the revolution and the value of all the revolutionary pretensions. (One day—August 4th 1914—was enough for the stupefied Lenin to see that the workers' leaders in the biggest workers' party in Europe were politically bourgeois: the German Socialists accepted the outbreak of the War.)

Two ways of defining a society follow. The first is *descriptive*: it is absorbed by a consideration of the calm surface, it counts the votes cast for the different parties, it compares the incomes and demands of the different classes. The second is *strategic*: it does not seek for illumination from the gentle clarity that bathes a bureaucratic society, it finds it in the lightning projected by crises or revolutions; it defines classes on the basis of their decisive conflicts and does not restrict itself to lining them up side by side; for it, the key to class statistics lies in the class struggle, not *vice versa*.

The May movement did not emerge from a parliamentary game, it has not died with an electoral diversion. Beneath the ballot papers survives the revolutionary situation disclosed in May.

III The Revolutionary Situation

Three distinctive signs point the originality of the May movement: the role of the students; the importance of the youth-adult opposition; and the 'anarchism', the anti-authoritarian aspect of its initiatives. These three characteristics, three constants, have been manifested by every French revolutionary movement. If they did not appear so perfectly or completely in 1936 or in 1944, the logical conclusion must be that the situation in 1968 is more revolutionary. The Communist leaders prefer to classify these features under the rubric 'leftism', refusing to observe that the youthful and impulsive style of a 20th-century revolution is staring them in the face.

²⁹ Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 87.

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The students discover that revolution is the prize; the 'youth revolt' discovers the revolution's strength; the anti-authoritarian impulse locates the decisive battlefield—the State. May distributed all the elements of an as yet unjoined battle.

Students and Popular Revolution

The student movement was made dynamite by what the strikers could read in it: socialism within arm's reach, and a way to lay their hands on socialism. Via the students, the workers discovered that revolution is possible: that is, they rediscovered themselves.

It is customary to distinguish student demands, which should be of purely academic scope, from their revolutionary 'dreams'. In the same way, one could 'distinguish' between sulphuric acid as sulphuric acid and petrol as petrol, and claim to have demonstrated on the basis of this correct analysis that the Molotov cocktail does not exist. Everyone knows the economic, social and demographic data that are transforming the university into a focus of permanent discontent. On the other hand, it has been forgotten that students have always been a critical mass whose explosion can unleash a revolution. The descriptive definition of the student situation conceals its strategic definition, a focus no longer of discontent, but of revolution.

The occupation of the Sorbonne had its shattering impact because it transformed every workers' struggle into a people's struggle. A purely working-class workers' revolution fails, as the Glorious Days of June 1848 showed: 'on the side of the Paris proletariat stood none but itself'.³⁰

A revolution has no chance of success unless it catches fire on its popular side, not just on its working-class side. When, two months after writing *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx attempted to radicalize the German Revolution (April 1848), he set up a bourgeois newspaper and agitated among the Rhenish bourgeoisie. It is not enough to explain that this was a special case, that a bourgeois revolution had to be completed first of all, before the torch could be taken over by the revolution of a still hardly developed proletariat. This is true, but it explains only the particular case, not the general law: every proletarian revolution is born of a 'nation-wide crisis', i.e. of a blocked bourgeois revolution, when democratic or national tasks urgently need attention and a bourgeois society reveals its inability to take them on for fear of being overtaken and losing its privileges.

The students 'in solidarity with the workers' have understood the mechanism of revolution: in the 20th century a separate '1789' has become impossible, and bourgeois-democratic aims can only be attained by the construction of a socialist society. There is no longer any room today for two revolutions, one democratic, the other proletarian. The first can only be attained because the second brings it in its train, in an initial phase that Lenin described in Russia as the

³⁰ Marx in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 254.

'democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants' and that the Chinese called 'New Democracy' and which Marx had already designated for continental Europe as a 'real people's revolution'.³¹

The students' struggle did not merely add the demands of the universities to those of the workers and peasants. The infectiousness of the example cannot be explained by an addition of demands. The launching of a strike in a factory always tends to set off chain reactions: 'the mor influence of strikes on the workers is as great as the spectacle of the comrades' ceasing, if only momentarily, to be slaves and becoming the equals of the wealthy is infectious for them.'³² In this factor, which Lenin calls 'moral' so as to suggest something in it that goes beyond the strictly economic demand, the latent revolution is seen in the momentarily conquered equality. The two biggest French strikes in the 20th century (1936 and 1968) owe their size to the materialization of the 'moral factor': the victory of the Popular Front,³³ like the red Sorbonne, was a revolution in embryo. A general strike—as everyone knows—brings the whole society into question, so the whole society must be brought into question for a general strike to break out. Even if the Communist Party refused them a duly signed affidavit, it was because they seemed revolutionary that the students acted as a spark in the powder-keg.

A proof that the situation was revolutionary: the powder caught.³⁴

³¹ Letter to Kugelmann, April 12th 1871. Lenin commented: 'In Europe, in 1871 there was not a single country on the Continent in which the proletariat constitute the majority of the people. A "people's" revolution, one that actually swept the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced both the proletariat and the peasants. These two classes then constituted the "people". These two classes are united by the fact that the "bureaucratic-military state machine" oppresses, crushes exploits them. To smash this machine, to break it up—is truly in the interest of the "people" . . . is "the preliminary condition" for a free alliance between the poor peasants and the proletarians' ('State and Revolution', *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 333. Every proletarian revolution, not just the Commune, is necessarily a people revolution in this sense:

1. because 'a number of new "middle strata" are inevitably brought into existence again and again by capitalism . . . it would be a profound mistake to think that the "complete" proletarianization of the majority of the population is essential for bringing about such a revolution' (Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 79).

2. the students, at the side of the socialist proletariat, can be 'the vanguard of revolutionary democracy', in opposition to the liberal bourgeoisie (1905).

Conclusion:

A Marxist Party 'does not divide the "people" into "classes" so that the advanced class will become locked up within itself, will confine itself within narrow limits, and emasculate its activity for fear that the economic rulers of the world will recoil; does that so that the advanced class, which does not suffer from the half-heartedness, vacillation and indecision of the intermediate classes, should fight with all the great energy and enthusiasm for the cause of the whole people, at the head of the whole people' (Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 572).

³² Lenin.

³³ From the street fighting of February 1934 to the electoral victory of April–May 1936.

³⁴ If a closer definition of this 'moral factor'—analogous to the 'exemplary value' of certain actions (March 22nd Movement)—is desired, it should be compared with the *effectiveness of symbols* whose function has been analysed by Lévi-Strauss. 'Crowd psychology', 'infectiousness' explain nothing because they explain anything. The Red Sorbonne was midwife to something quite precise: the workers' 'latent socialism'. Where a different kind of birth was concerned: 'It would be convenient to

Youth or the Revolt of the Productive Forces

In the factories, when it was essential to organize the strike, to begin occupation, to fight with the CRS; in the universities; in the streets; in the schools; everywhere, young people were much the most determined. Similarly with the young staff, engineers and technicians who participated in the movement as in no previous strike. Vague psychological theories about inter-generational conflict cannot explain the importance suddenly assumed by the young who became both unifying principle and accelerator of the revolutionary movement.

A young worker is a young worker, a young bourgeois is a young bourgeois, youth does not form a social class—true statements that the ‘thinkers’ in the Communist Party have transformed into a warm muffler. A young worker is not a mature worker, a young technician is not—usually—an old technician, the difference exploded in the May movement.

Deep, the break is not a fixed one. Age only gives a first indication; one French worker in four will be under 25 by 1971. Under 25 = unemployment, low wages, housing crisis, etc: age does not determine youth positively (biological maturity is reached at 14), bourgeois society defines it negatively by excluding it. The young man wanders in society without dwelling there, the society exploits him without ‘integrating’ him. The capitalist economy and the State administration position the frontier-poles in relation to their peculiar and variable needs; hence the line of contestation varies without being definable by date of birth. It is possible to stay young all one’s life; materially it means poverty and insecurity; socially, damnation; intellectually, good fortune.

The students’ revolt ‘caught’ as a trail not of powder but of youth. Sons of bourgeois, relatively privileged future personnel, the students are all these things, but above all they constitute a reservoir of productive forces: when they examine their future they cannot but contest society globally. Their future is balanced on the point where living labour bows to monetary relations; where their productive forces are integrated, broken or perverted by what Marx called the ‘narrow basis’ of the (social) relations of production. The most important thing in life is the choice of a career: society decides it by making one unemployed, another a lackey. The student struggle crystallizes and publicly demonstrates *the revolt of modern productive forces as a whole against bourgeois relations of production*.

In other words: the sole cause Marx assigned to a European revolution.

He described as ‘productive forces’ not only machines and the material organization of production, but also men—the assembled workers, together with science and the bearers of science, technical knowledge and the technicians. The more industry develops, the more science

dismiss these difficulties by declaring that we are dealing with psychological crises. But this term will remain meaningless unless we can explain how specific psychological representations are invoked to combat equally specific physiological disturbances’ (Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, New York, 1963, p. 191).

appears as an immediate productive force: 'the whole production process does not present itself as subsumed under the immediate ability of the worker, but as a technological application of science.'³⁵ The distance between Renault and the faculties decreases with the convergence of their positions in the production process: 'Then invention becomes business and the application of science to immediate production a determining and encouraging criterion for production itself.'³⁶

To read in the May sky the conjuncture of the 'students' movement with the 'workers' movement' (adding the trail of the technician comet) is to watch the planets turn while forgetting the sun. The worker, the student, the young technician, the research worker: together they bring into question the whole organization of the production of wealth. The general revolt is the revolt of the *producer*: 'It is less the immediate labour performed by man himself or the time that he works than the appropriation of his general productivity, his comprehension of nature and dominion over it through his existence as social body that appears as the supporting pillar of production and wealth.'³⁷

Wage-increases begin to be curtailed by the 'needs of the economy' henceforth these needs themselves are in question. The first example of 'worker-controlled' production in striking factories, the multiplication of management committees and reform commissions set up by the strikers, introduced a demand quite different from a simple rise in wages: *the abolition of the wage-earner*. The classic slogan has become an immediate prospect; it does not imply the immediate disappearance of wages, but a recognition of the fact that a producer is not *paid* by the sum doled out to him, even with some minimal rise. Money can no longer be the equivalent of the worker, just as it cannot remain the measure of the global needs of the economy.

The scandal inaugurated in May was perfect: people *spoke* without *counting*. At all levels producers speculated with words, while the speechless speculators could no longer decide the fate of this labour on that research by comparing rates of profit on investments. There had been a hierarchy of silence which transmitted the 'needs of the economy', punctuated by recessions and crisis, from summit to base. There now suddenly emerged a pyramid of initiatives in the opposite direction

A regulatory mechanism is necessary—but why that of free competition, which is very limited anyway? Why that of State finance, which can anyway be used in various ways? A simpler one began to come into use, the mouth and the ear. The greatest American economists have with suspicious haste, discovered that gold 'is a barbarous fetish',³⁸ and that it would be better to govern international exchange by conversations between officials than by the 'blind mechanisms' of monetary circulation. The idea suggests that the recipe could be applied to the

³⁵ Karl Marx: *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Berlin 1953, p. 587 (French edition: *Fondements de la Critique de l'Économie politique*, Paris, 1967, Vol. II, p. 214).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 591 (*Fondements*: Vol. II, p. 220).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 593 (*Fondements*: Vol. II, p. 222).

³⁸ Keynes.

national economy by producers who regard themselves as at least as 'responsible' as the present leaders of the great powers. The participation of research workers, technicians and young managerial staff in the May movement has revealed the difference between financial hierarchy and technical responsibility in the French economy. The realm of the word succeeding the realm of money, decisions taken in relation to social utility and not to the profitability of relatively short-term investments, public debate instead of private negotiation, control of production by the producers: socialism.

*

In a society peculiarly ripe for a revolution, the front of the class struggle traverses the whole society. Youth is not a new class, it holds an outpost in front of the proletarian positions because it embodies the revolution of the productive forces as a whole. The opposition between capital and labour has become directly visible as the question of life and death: 'in other words, in opposition to labour past in time but existing in space (=capital and capitalist society) there is living labour present in time . . . Capital . . . can only be opposed by living labour power'.³⁹ Bourgeois society is the corpse seizing the living.

Reciprocally, the bourgeois front includes other strata of the population who profit indirectly by exploitation, or are afraid. A pregnant society without a revolution as midwife develops parasitic excrescences which would be cut out by decisions made in rational and public discussion. The productive forces are less and less individual, more and more collective and organized; hence in so far as an individual no longer participates actively in production, his feelings of powerlessness increase, along with his need for some security, however inadequate. Hence his fear of the unknown that is modern production, as seen from afar. Dread of a change which is outside one's own control is the argument of the party of order; the incoherence of the capitalist economy assures it parliamentary strength.

No stratum of the population escapes division. Humility before the 'needs' of the (capitalist) economy may affect certain fractions of the working class; 'in machines, knowledge appears as an alienated knowledge outside the worker'.⁴⁰ Especially if there is a 'labour aristocracy' that fears for its own security, fears for the crumbs it collects in the present economy. Engels and Lenin denounced the leaders of the English trade unions as perfect representatives of this parasitic 'elite'. Often during the May strikes, young people and old workers (who could remember 1936) found themselves united in opposition to certain over-'moderate' middle-aged officials.

Ten million strikers: not just the great majority of wage-workers, but the best part of the nation's productive forces—whence the possibility of a *people's* revolution. But this is not as such a majority of the population. Furthermore, united in the occupation of their factories the strikers were the only decision centres; dispersed in their homes they became once again the objects of decisions transmitted by their radios

³⁹ Marx: *Grundrisse*, *op. cit.*, p. 942 (*Fondements*, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 652).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 586 (*Fondements*: Vol. II, p. 213).

and newspapers—whence the necessity for a people's *revolution*. Parliament does not represent the productive forces; it will not give them power though it may well be that it will endorse *post festum* the fact that they have seized it and will hold it. Power is not given, but taken.

The Anti-Authoritarian Initiative and the Withering Away of the State

May was the month of Diogenes: everyone went on strike in his own tub. The unions asked the State and the bosses, 'What would you do without us?'; they withheld the following question, 'What will we do without them?'. The State, reduced to its head, in its turn suggested a strike movement, 'What would you do without me?'

The reply to this would presuppose that the strikers pass from resisting power to exercising power—it was proposed (at Nantes) but carefully repressed by the 'representative' organizations of the working class. Yet it is a classic solution: 'The next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it, and this is the preliminary condition for every real people's revolution on the continent.'⁴¹

In May, the bureaucratic machine was blocked by its own self-contestation, and the army was ill-prepared for intervention; only the police remained, weakened and somewhat demoralized.

The military apparatus, considerably reduced since Napoleon III's plethoric army, is incapable of taking on the task of repression. It could not replace the strikers' economic activity, nor bring them back to work one by one. Engels, who had to deal with a much more reactionary and powerful army (that of Prussia), remarked that it was impossible that 'the economic consequences of the steam-engine and the banking and credit developments of the present day, can be blown out of existence . . . with Krupp guns and Mauser rifles.'⁴² Also, the presence of conscripts, and of certain technicians ill-disposed to police duty, impede any such utilization of the army.⁴³

⁴¹ Marx in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 463.

⁴² *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow 1959, p. 228.

⁴³ In a (far more) difficult situation for a revolution, in 1876, Engels went on: 'The army has become the main purpose of the State, and an end in itself; the peoples are there only to provide soldiers and feed them. Militarism dominates and is swallowing Europe. But this militarism also bears within itself the seed of its own destruction. Competition among the individual states forces them . . . to make 'the whole people familiar with the use of arms, and therefore enables them at a given moment to make their will prevail against the war-lords in command. And this moment will arrive as soon as the mass of the people—town and country workers and peasants—will have a will. At this point the armies of the princes become transformed into armies of the people; the machine refuses to work, and militarism collapses by the dialectics of its own evolution. What the bourgeois democracy of 1848 could not accomplish, just because it was *bourgeois* and not proletarian, namely, to give the labouring masses a will whose content would be in accord with their class position—socialism will infallibly secure. And this will mean the bursting asunder from *within* of militarism and with it of all standing armies' (*Anti-Dühring*, *op. cit.*, pp. 235–236); what the parliamentarianism of 1938 could not accomplish is 'infallibly' within the scope of a revolutionary movement.

The State bureaucracy began to break up internally, offering the delightful spectacle of a minister responsible for the maintenance of order whose communications with the provinces were cut off by strikes in his own transmission services. So the distinction between the repressive and parasitic organs of the State and its legitimate functions can easily be drawn. State employees can easily become the employees of society.⁴⁴

Every revolutionary policy has two faces: if they are separated one seems 'dirigist' (Jacobin dictatorship, dictatorship of the proletariat) the other 'anarchist' (destruction of the State as a parasitic excrescence, 'withering away of the State'). These are not two successive stages, the dictatorship of the proletariat does not precede revolutionary and socialist democracy, these two tasks are distinct but *contemporaneous*. A revolution must defend itself—often against foreign armies—hence the dictatorship exercised against the enemy. A revolution must exist and as such 'develop democracy to the limit', not by replacing the State machine by another hierarchy (the Party), but by installing the principle that officials at all levels should be elected and subject to recall: 'And it is well known that companies, like individuals, in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man in the right place, and, if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand, nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede universal suffrage by hierarchic investiture.'⁴⁵

Marx's 'forgotten words' returned to everyone's lips in May; he had gathered them from the expiring lips of the Commune, the inspiration returned to its native land. Lenin had adopted them word for word just before October 1917: the moment 'the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is *no longer necessary*. In this sense the State *begins to wither away*.'⁴⁶ If later on he had

⁴⁴ 'The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal *régime* once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old centralized Government would in the provinces, too, have to give way to the self-government of the producers . . . The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organized by the Communal Constitution and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society. Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for the workmen and managers in his business' (Marx: 'The Civil War in France', Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 520-521).

⁴⁵ Marx: 'The Civil War in France' (Ibid., p. 521). Similarly Engels: 'The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous, and then withers away of itself; the government of persons is replaced by the administration of things. The State is not "abolished". It withers away' (*Anti-Dühring*, p. 387).

⁴⁶ Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 335.

to abandon 'democracy to the limit', and reinforce the State and the bureaucracy, he did so in a devastated Russia with 30 million dead through blockade, foreign intervention and civil war—and did so, moreover, fully aware of the 'feudal' danger involved. The principles of government drawn from the Paris Commune are much more 'modern' and up-to-date than the model of the State existing in the USSR.

In May, the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' only needed to be exercised against the strike-breakers: part of the police, a few private commandoes and perhaps a section of the Army. Only the other task set back the revolution: no supposedly democratic or revolutionary party agreed to help the State 'with away' thanks to elected leaders, subject to recall; no-one chose to confront permanent universal suffrage at all levels. Under the pretext that they had to discuss a governmental programme, they put the bourgeois State back on the programme and deprived the strikers of government.

Far from 'developing democracy to the limit', the parliamentary election was, in these circumstances, merely a means to 'supersede universal suffrage by hierarchical investiture'.

In a France economically ultra-ripe for revolution, nowhere threatened with external aggression, the tasks of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' are much smaller than those of the extension of 'democracy to the limit'. But the withering away of the State presupposes the withering away of the parties. States within the State, each regarding itself as the future State, by defending the bourgeois State they were struggling for their own survival.

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Popular, the revolution begun in May is revealed in the image of it that is reflected by students and young workers, as much as in its contestation of the power of money and the State.

Bourgeois society is everyday reborn and resuscitated by the silence of the people. Above wishes and demands, it erects the requirements of the economy and the law of investments. Above the conflict of private needs and interests, it installs its monopolies and its State: 'in every epoch the stability of the State power signified Moses and the prophets to the entire money market and to the priests of this money market.'⁴⁷ Higher still, if necessary, the force that preserves Order—even if 'the blade that should protect it is also fatally a sword of Damocles suspended over its head'.⁴⁸ Today the sword is too blunt to secure the rule of silence: silence secures its rule.

IV The Safety-Catches

The stake is revolution. Whether it is made or not, all the forces act as a function of this possibility which the May movement has brought to the

⁴⁷ Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 318.

⁴⁸ Marx.

horizon of our political life. In calm periods — which are, for the working class, defensive epochs in which the maintenance and reinforcement of advantages already achieved is the aim of the hour—the parties seem to be distinguished by their (essentially electoral) programmes: one is 'further to the left' than another, more 'working class' than another.

A deep crisis alters all weights and measures: the parties no longer simply define each other, their place in a parliament is not enough to characterize them, they are judged by their position with respect to the revolution. The small-shopkeeper competition ceases; the forces of the right, moving towards conscious counter-revolution, no longer choose their enemy by asking 'is he left-wing or not' but rather wonder, 'is he restraining the rising revolution, or voluntarily or involuntarily encouraging it?' Inversely, the forces of opposition make a fresh tally of their numbers. There was never a revolutionary party that did not undergo an internal crisis or split when the urgent demands of a revolution were forced on it; all Lenin's intellectual authority was not enough to save the leadership of the Bolshevik party from this travail (in March and October, 1917).

The electoral-parliamentary operation of June has not evaporated the profoundly revolutionary situation revealed in May. On the other hand, it demonstrated the resistance of the safety-catch that blocks the development of the revolution. Ten million strikers do not return to work because of the two hundred thousand men in the forces of order. There was no change of régime: the development of the revolutionary movement was restrained *from within*. The leaders, political (PCF) and trade-union (CGT), who claim a monopoly of revolutionary leadership in France, were alone able to restore the capitalist economy to movement and elections to the order of the day.

Now all political groups are wondering how long this block can last. The counter-revolutionary as well as the revolutionary forces calculate their action as a function of the strength of the safety-catch. If it is sufficient, the present balance is stable and France can withstand another university crisis, inflation and unemployment without great risk of convulsion. If not, the hour of confrontation is approaching and the opponents will furbish their highly extra-parliamentary weapons.

The Communist leadership is the key to a national situation on the one hand, and to an international situation on the other. The balance of forces in June—which was not a result of the elections, since the parliamentary elections were a result of it—was produced by two restraints, both developing a highly explosive contradiction: order reigns at the summit of volcanoes whose dormancy is not guaranteed.

The Internal Restraint

Revolutionary in words and parliamentary in action, the French Communist Party is the twin of the German Social-Democratic Party before 1914. Its participation in Soviet destiny from a distance, and directly in the French Resistance, gives a more violent coloration to the actions of

its leaders and the reactions of its adherents, but the relation remains an essentially bureaucratic one. After decades of a parliamentary régime its 'professional revolutionaries' have become functionaries. Lenin, speaking of the German Marxists, described this quasi-fatal mechanism:

'We do not get along without officials *under capitalism*, under *the rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the working people are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage slavery, and the poverty and misery of the people. This and this alone is the reason why the functionaries of our political organizations and trade unions are corrupted—or, more precisely, tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism and betray a tendency to become bureaucrats, i.e. privileged persons divorced from the people and standing *above* the people.

'That is the *essence* of bureaucracy: and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian functionaries will inevitably be "bureaucratized" to a certain extent.'⁴⁹

In May, the Communist Party was the sole institution in which the functionaries did not explicitly contest the hierarchy. In its dreams of power it imagines that a simple rule of parliamentary succession will allow it to command and govern 'with the old State machine'; it thinks it is defending its future heritage by prohibiting today's contestation from harming it. Perhaps in so doing it shares the bureaucratic naivety of the German Socialists who almost unanimously agreed to break their international commitments, which were just as unanimous, and to accept the inauguration of four years of world slaughter: in 1914 they did not vote against the War, because they wanted to remain legal and not run any risks—they, the present functionaries of the socialism of the future. Lenin accused the most intelligent of the German Marxist leaders, Kautsky, of having forgotten that the transition from capitalism to socialism would be achieved by revolution, hence by the destruction of the repressive bourgeois State. Each time that Marxism deteriorates into a religion of bureaucrats, this error is repeated: the functionaries of the revolution metamorphose the revolution into a permutation of functionaries.

However, a contradiction torments this kind of party which feeds its parliamentary tranquillity on the vast numbers of votes it obtains, and only obtains these votes by proclaiming itself revolutionary. The contradiction remains hidden so long as the emergency of a revolutionary situation does not bring it into the open; it then becomes rending, and effectively rends the party when the circumstances make its double game untenable.

Despite all its 'shameful failings', Lenin observed, the German Party did, after 1914, reveal revolutionary cadres who escaped 'the opportunism and lack of character' of their former leaders. The Communist

⁴⁹ Lenin: 'The State and Revolution', *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 395.

Party can only guarantee parliamentary tranquillity in a period of social tranquillity.

The contradiction can be borne for decades so long as everything remains immobile. A revolutionary movement accentuates it and threatens to explode it. In May millions of strikers discovered the utility of the trade-union and political activity that they had neglected before. Hence the competition between the trade unions (CFDT and CGT), and even between the parties (PCF/PSU), each attempting to prove itself a little more revolutionary than its rival so as to gain members and votes. The effect of political and trade-union pluralism is inverted: in a period of calm it tends to reduce action to the least common denominator, in a crisis it escalates it. At such times the Party is trapped between conflicting exigencies: on the one hand it has to reassure its parliamentary colleagues, more and more disturbed by the rise of the revolutionary movement; on the other it has to cultivate its revolutionary image unless it is to be discredited. It begins to go round in circles publicly.

This external competition is duplicated in chaplets of internal contradictions: theoretical contradictions, between the revolutionary spirit of Marxism and parliamentary gestures; practical contradictions, between what could be done and what really is done. Bureaucracy having never suppressed competition between bureaucrats, the latter can envenom the situation; each established official upholding the party spirit encounters a rival taking the part of the revolutionary spirit. A party acting as a safety-catch in an explosive situation becomes itself an explosive safety-catch.

Everyone realizes this, including the counter-revolutionary organizations. A party claiming to be revolutionary that, in fact, blocks a revolution has itself no guarantee against repression: if the latter does not begin by falling on it, it is not effectively complete without doing so. Hitler began by liquidating the German Communist Party, the Socialist Party followed, then came the rest.

The equilibrium maintained by the Party in a revolutionary situation in turn installs it within three great contradictions: *around it*, organizations try to outflank it to the left; *inside it*, cadres threaten to turn the leadership in both directions; *facing it*, the party of order can prepare to destroy a Communist Party which, although it freezes the 'disorder', is nonetheless itself frozen disorder: a frozen abscess is better than a generalized infection, but it remains an abscess.

If the sole guarantee the Communist Party offered the French bourgeoisie were its bureaucratization, the equilibrium would be much weaker than it appears to be at the moment. The Party is not a restraint just because of the theoretical and practical impotence typical of functionaries of the revolution; there is a positive reason—its general political line duplicates this guarantee.

The International Restraint

Openly, without any secrecy, France has begun to prepare a second

striking force (*force de frappe*), which may be ready before the first. Of world scope ('*tous azimuts*'), the French revolution once launched will provoke no counter-strike, for no foreign power has the means to impose the rule of order in Paris militarily.

If the infection spreading among the faculties and the factories triumphs, it will not stay within the limits of the hexagon of France. Workers' and students' struggles, the crisis of parliamentary or presidential régimes, are not the exclusive privilege of France and inflammable material exists nearly everywhere. A revolution in Paris would very shortly bring chain reactions in Western Europe (Rome, Athens, Madrid, etc) as well as in Eastern Europe (Warsaw, etc); a socialist model developing democracy to the limit would introduce into every industrialized society a political life no longer restricted to the permutation of personalities at the apex of the State. The multiplication of political centres, through the withering away of the State and democracy at all levels, offers an infectious model that rebellious faculties throughout the world have already taken it upon themselves to spread, and working classes to understand and apply. A socialist revolution in France will unleash the tempest step by step.

The guardian powers who gain from the global equilibrium have foreseen this danger; their response, to be effective, must be preventive. The USA could not come to re-establish order in France by force without being sucked into a new Vietnam; but it prudently aids the French Government, without taking advantage of the situation to revenge itself on a hardly friendly friend. The Soviet Union is just as directly in the line of fire; if the students of the people's democracies follow the Parisian example, their riots will not remain purely student riots; a people's revolution in France promises further revolutions, of various types, in the majority of countries in Eastern Europe, and threatens to spread to Russia itself. The disquiet aroused in Soviet leaders by the Czech reforms is a foretaste of the dread they feel at the possibility of a revolution in France.

The order which reigns in Moscow, Warsaw and Berlin must be defended in Paris; the leadership of the French Communist Party has made itself its guardian. We are now paying very dearly for the forced police 'socialization' of Central Europe. In his journey to Rumania, De Gaulle certainly did not neglect internal French affairs, when he described the USSR as an 'essential pillar' of Europe; he meant that the Communist leadership had become an essential pillar of bourgeois order. For 'proletarian internationalism' it substitutes European equilibrium, and it replaces the defence of the 'socialist camp' against an external military aggression by the defence of the Soviet leadership against any people's movement from within. The States of Eastern and Western Europe have the same enemy: a revolution in the West.

France being the key to the two orders that share Europe, they both try to prevent the key from turning. June was a small carve-up of the globe; the bourgeoisie conserved their ownership of the State; the Party, their ownership of the working masses, back in the factories. Electoral challenges directed against 'totalitarianism' or 'monopoly'

power' have the advantage that they assure each of the two proprietors the right to use and abuse their respective game preserves. The 'theoretical' condemnation of leftism on the one hand, the police ban on the 'grouplets' of students and workers on the other, demonstrate the solidarity of the two powers in the face of the same danger.⁵⁰

'The Russian began it, the German, the Frenchman and the Englishman will finish it, and socialism will be victorious' proclaimed Lenin in 1918.⁵¹ The time that has passed since then has not been long enough for the situation to alter radically. The USSR does not threaten to 'exploit' a socialist revolution in France: a revolution in Paris promises to spread Eastwards. De Gaulle believes he can count on the power of order that Moscow has become (again) to make the leadership of the PCF and the CGT the gendarmes of the French workers' movement.

The Communist leadership has not only held the movement back from the revolutionary slope by the prudent, cowardly restraint characteristic of every satisfied bureaucracy. It has, of course, considered the fact that the withering away of the State would imply its own withering away; that its hierarchy would not dominate the democratic turmoil of a revolutionary and socialist France; that an important proportion of its 'officials' would be rapidly overtaken by the new cadres that emerge in every authentic movement. But it has an even stronger motive; if it raised a barrier against the revolutionary development of the May movement, rather than in its own name it did so in the name of the entire leadership of the 'socialist camp' (the USSR and the people's democracies). The equilibrium in France in June is the keystone of the stability of the two orders that share Europe: the safety-catch is international.

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Strangely enough, the revolution in Western Europe has once again been trapped between the order from the East and the order from the West, each supporting the other. The situation that Marx analysed in 1850 seems to have been reproduced; at that time Tsarist Russia and England, the most advanced capitalist country (today the USA), were the gendarmes of the whole continent.

However, the equilibrium of a Europe of order is much weaker today than it was a century ago. *Physically*, Russia can no longer intervene

⁵⁰ The historian of the future will investigate whether the bargain was made in clear terms (which is highly likely) or merely veiled: the Communist Party ordered the return to work in the factories, the Government granted the suppression of the revolutionary 'grouplets'. At the beginning of May, the CGT leaders had announced their agreements with the 'Right Honourable Prime Minister' when Georges Pompidou declared that the agitation in the faculties was the result of a plot with vast international ramifications. What were these? Moscow gold being out of the question, there was hesitation between Peking gold (which totally provoked the 'cultural revolution' in the Faculty of Medicine), Washington gold (the CIA having had the idea of raising the barricades in order to save the dollar), English gold (a tradition) or gold from the Free University of Berlin. If none of these remarkable constructions will hold water, there remains the Rhine gold, dear to Wagner. The revolution remains for all the forces of order an incomprehensible power, alien (*étrange*), and hence 'alien' (*étranger*).

⁵¹ Lenin: *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 600.

militarily against revolutions in Western Europe. *Intellectually*, it is impossible in the long run to base the maintenance of bourgeois order on organizations that recruit their members with a revolutionary ideology—they will very rapidly disintegrate. Students, young workers, even young technicians are disturbing this precarious equilibrium. It is doubly difficult to hide from the bourgeoisie that their children (the students) are being beaten up to save Moscow; from the workers, that their young comrades are being repressed to defend capitalism.

All Europe leans on France to preserve the present uncertainty, but the workers' struggles and the university crisis have not disappeared for all that. The régime still fears the revolution, the PCF and CGT still embody the possibility of it, in their own self-defence. Repression and Revolution follow the logic of escalation and counter escalation: either the State power retreats or it forces a retreat. A revolutionary movement can only be stopped definitively by something closer and closer to a police State.

Each crisis raises fears as to the strength of the safety-catch, obliging the French Communist Party to choose its camp. Nothing excludes the possibility that it will pride itself—at the cost of an internal explosion—on the singular honour of being the first legal Communist Party in a fascist State. Then we shall know that, by the intermediary of the CRS, the cossacks will be enforcing the rule of order in the Latin Quarter for the protection of the Kremlin, while the trade union polices the factories to ensure respect for Western order.

This is the Gordian knot that is strangling Europe; this is what blocks the May movement.

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Contradictions only co-exist in calm and only sustain one another in silence. A prey to their particular problems, the USA and the Soviet Union can only bring indirect moral support to the forces of order whose alliance excludes neither mistrust nor competition. The agitation and contestation that have been developed since May make these contradictions incandescent, and may stretch the equilibrium to its breaking-point.

V Action

If the movement unleashed in May had had only one opponent in its struggle, the future problem it would have to envisage would be that of the decentralized and popular organization of a socialist France practising 'democracy to the limit'. But the Communist leadership's restraint was much more effective than the governmental resistance; surprise will no longer unleash the forces held down by that leadership. However, May revealed means of action that allow us to hope that we will be able to blow off the safety-catch.

The Contestation

Invoking revolution against authority, and the authority of a revolution

to be made against the authorities who did not make it, the movement came up against three obstacles: apathy, which it killed by its birth, and the fear and the mystification which alone gave the repression its strength. A society ripe for revolution must, on pain of a painless birth, when it sees its ripeness, forget that it remains a society—the Right brandishes the spectre of anarchy; when it acknowledges itself as society, conceal its ripeness—the Communist leadership's surveys predict for it an 'unfavourable balance of forces'. This incestuous couple is prolific: the Left fears the Right's fears, the Right finds itself to the left of its Left mirror, the centre notes that the opposition between the two is more apparent than real while pretending to forget that the reality of the agreement flourishes on the apparent opposition. A party of order that does not save society from 'totalitarianism' does not save itself; a revolutionary party that no longer has a hallowed revolutionary soul is lost as body and party. As the cards are dealt, so must they lie; the rule of the game is not to play it.

Hence the effectiveness of a *contestation* that does not so much find its principle in some book as its opportunity in our society; it is content to say what everyone does and to do what everyone says he does so as not to have to do it. When the 'relation of forces' is merely a verbal construction and the forces of each 'camp' are worn out by holding back words, it is enough to deal with words by words and force by force in order to undermine the whole structure and produce an explosive shock. Fertilizing revolutionary action with the freedom to say anything, the 'movement' undermines the counter-revolutionary action conducted in the name of the 'freedom' of work and speech, as well as the revolutionary inaction concealed by a speech without freedom. The prohibition of prohibition is in disloyal competition with the orders that loyally share France; 'humbly the strange god takes his place on the altar beside the idol of the land; little by little he gains in strength; one fine day he gives his comrade a push with his elbow, and, *patatras!* down goes the idol!'⁵²

Universal contestation accompanies every great revolution, it ransacks the whole society, turns it upside down, substituting its frivolous for its serious, the better to overturn it. 1917 experienced its contestation, but so too, long before, did 1789, preceded by a disrespect both popular and subtle whose trail can be followed throughout the nineteenth century—anarchism was one of its forms—and then in the twentieth century, producing for example surrealism 'in the service of the Revolution'. The scribbled walls of the faculties spoke a language as old as revolution itself, the working class has known it for more than a century. The young workers became the fools of a society seized by the folly of renewed revolution: 'he who would be wise should have no fool, so that he who has a fool is not wise; if he is not wise, he is a fool, and, perhaps, were he the king, the fool of his fool.'⁵³ May was the month of Diderot's nephews before it was the month of Lenin's children.

Although general, the contestation did not tot up some imaginary sum

⁵² Diderot: *Ramens's Nephews*, trans. S. M. Hill, London 1897, p. 131.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

of the current demands of the different strata of the population; it directly attacked the State and economy which disallow any operation of this kind by producing and reproducing the division between the classes of the people and within each of them. These classes only become *one* people by contesting the bourgeois frame of reference and adopting a revolutionary perspective. Contestation is 'negative' in so far as it is external to the divisions and disciplines of established society as well as prior to the construction of socialism (Marx himself left others the task of 'stirring the soup of the future'). It only becomes centralized strategically, so as to co-ordinate its attack on the power of a centralized State. It is as scattered as the decision centres of the people will be in the society of the future; its forms are multiple, as is the life of a country, and as solidary as is its language. 'The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations; no wonder that its development involves the most radical rupture with traditional ideas.'³⁴

Contestation does not attack the real order in the name of an imaginary disorder; it pronounces the reality of disorder and denounces the shame that masks it. Critical in that it separates two kinds of society, aggressive because this separation takes place in bourgeois society, it is the movement in which the productive forces enter into a relationship beyond bourgeois relations of production: not so as to abolish aesthetic, technical or scientific labour, but to destroy the partitions and limits whereby this is reconciled to a society which is still our own. 'Contestation' is merely a word, easily refuted by whoever is wilfully blind to the movement of speech and action by which one epoch detaches itself from another, past epoch. The master-word and the regulatory activity of the society now dying was 'reconciliation' (*adaptation*)—of the young to the old, of socialism to capitalism and *vice versa*, of human relations to the inhumanity of exploitation, etc. May proclaim that participation could no longer manufacture reconciliation—whether in linear, progressive or circular fashion. Contestation is first contestation of *reconciliation*. One of the two terms is meaningless. Which is it to be?

Of course, we have to 'make a living' so as to survive; but we do so to assuage our hunger, not to celebrate the mass of reconciliation. A society that rejects revolution transforms its rejection into a religion; fear is its prophet and immobility its God. Contestation is pronounced sacrilege.

Doubly so. *Critical*, it separates technical needs (of the productive forces) from narrow necessities (of the bourgeois relations of production)—hence the protest of workers, research workers and young

³⁴ 'The Communist Manifesto' (Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 53). Let the worthy 'thinkers' who describe their intellectual virginity as Marxist so as to put it up for sale take comfort if they find that their theoretical bandwagon will not bear the contestation of 'everything'. Instead of leafing through their histories of literature to extract the rubric 'romanticism', why don't they read Marx—with a degree of intelligence? They would find that the 'everything' contested is not nothing, but quite precisely the capitalist relations of production whose definition in *Capital* or the *Critique of Political Economy* they will appreciate.

technicians, who do not accept that investments of manual and intellectual labour should bow to the investiture of financial powers. *In revolt*, it gathers together all society's semi-pariahs—youth, immigrant labour, etc; it destroys ghettos, the boundaries of the wisdom of nations, in which their vices flourish—social and racial segregation, sexual repression, etc; here the free Sorbonne becomes a new 'ship of fools', and in it decent folk locate all the perversions that haunt them.⁵⁵ Separated, one of these two faces of contestation leads to the stagnant waters of reformism, the other towards literature; together, they mingle renaissance and revolution. When young workers and students reinvent language, action and politics, another society is announced: 'What you term the beggar's pantomime, my faith, is the world's great fling!'⁵⁶

The contestation was not neutralized as 'student folklore', because it smashed one of the high places where society takes itself seriously—the University—and was understood by a culture that good society ridicules—the revolutionary tradition. On the basis of this understanding, forms of action and organization can be set up to develop it.

The Movement: Workers and Students

The Sorbonne is no factory—that is why the first red flag over the revolutionary Sorbonne sparked off such a movement in the factories. The students are 'strangers' to the workers, but they are not 'cut off from them; they acted on them from outside and as outsiders: 'Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*—that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the State and the government—the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes.'⁵⁷ The students are not the Bolshevik Party, they did not bring (revolutionary) political consciousness to the workers, but they brought to this already existing consciousness elements that had remained outside it. The mere fact of the students' mass action presented the relation between State and classes in a new light; extra-parliamentary forms of action and student debates were added. Coming from outside the worker-employer relationship, the student is both informant (by his action) and informant (by his own slogans and speeches); the two awaken the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat.

Communication between students and workers is barred—decreasingly by the workers' age-old distrust and the students' initial clumsiness, but still by the very effective barriers set up by the PCF and the CGT when they have the chance. The frontier survived, but contact was made. The Sorbonne became a revolutionary theatre, the spectators did not need to applaud the actors; the students invoked, their action evoked, the

⁵⁵ Contestation is opposed to the reconciliatory rationality of official society a 'unreason'—Michel Foucault has situated the rise of a similar upheaval before the 1789 Revolution (*Madness and Civilization*, London 1967, Chs. VII-IX).

⁵⁶ Diderot, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

⁵⁷ Lenin (1902): *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 190.

renewed history of workers' struggles provoked. The students acted before and upon a memory: they were indeed less 'conscious' than Lenin's professional revolutionaries, but the 'spontaneity' of the French worker in 1968 is the product of a long experience of class struggle—it is much more political than that of the Russian worker in 1900. Socialism always penetrates into the worker-employer relation from without; the way it happens varies with the situation, and with it the agents of transmission.

This work—bringing revolutionary consciousness from without—defines, according to Lenin, the three tasks, theoretical, political and economic, of a Marxist Party. The tasks survive even when the Party is missing: every revolutionary movement struggles on three fronts.

For fifteen years the students have occupied the outposts; they have organized a hard, ceaseless struggle against the Algerian War, the OAS and the American intervention in Vietnam. Opposing violence to fascist violence, they have won the Latin Quarter. Each time condemned as 'leftists' by the Communist Party, they have created their own organizations ('grouplets'). What the students have introduced 'from without' is the condensed result of their struggles. And of their discussions, hermetic only for the worthy majority of ordinary Frenchmen—whether pro- or anti-Communist—who believe that socialism is 'what happens in Russia', not the coherent set of ideas that has convulsed Europe for a hundred years and which changes with each new continent discovered.

Student experience is confined to students only in so far as the revolutionary movement was weaker or even non-existent elsewhere. The struggle on three fronts and the grading of these three fronts is a classic rule. Although the students did not mount the barricades just to alter the form of their studies and the student-teacher relationship, they do nevertheless know that without the barricades university reform would have remained a private affair in which government disorder would have had free play.

The political struggle precedes the economic struggle which develops in its wake. "The fact that economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e., trade union) struggle is of prime importance; for the most essential, the "decisive" interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general."³⁸ The theoretical ideas of the students still diverge, but there is one that is common to anarchism, to Marx, to Lenin, to Trotsky, to Mao and to Guevara; this defines politics as a struggle, theory as a 'guide to action' and the subordination of the entire political perspective to parliamentary activity alone as an advanced form of parliamentary cretinism. The May streets condensed a decade of political confrontation and theoretical discussion.

If the student movement is external to the workers, the meaning of its experience is internal to the political consciousness of the working

³⁸ Ibid., p. 162n.

class—which through it finds the possibility of socialism, and in it the elementary functioning of a revolutionary movement. Hence its explosive effect. The students invoked the spectre that haunts Europe, the spectre appeared: it was indeed a revolution. Another phantom accompanied it: the counter-revolution that is born of every impotent revolution.

The initial dialogue was not enough to exorcize it. Student action stepped into the place—the empty and hence theatrical place—of the workers' revolutionary organization: it did not replace it.

The Forms of Action

The political life we are used to can be summed up as attempts to make a suggestion rise by some hierarchical path to a decision centre—a central authority or State representative—which then makes it redescend via another hierarchical channel at the end of which there will be either an action or nothing. Between the speaker and the respondent, as between saying and doing, there is interposed the whole State apparatus, often duplicated by the bureaucracies of the parties—oppositional or governmental—which imitate it. Whoever does not have the ear of his superiors finds he is condemned to the ballot paper, the wage-slip and the television news.

This depoliticization of society by the State seems so natural that even a new form of political initiative is regarded as 'seduction of the masses' or demagoguery. The May movement forced the 'authorities' to confront the 'masses' and the masses to do without the absent authorities—giving Western societies their first chance to abandon the political desert in which they are encamped.

Contestation is, in itself, constructive, because it creates the preconditions for a political life. The multiple centres it provides—action committees, strike committees, faculty committees, student meetings etc.—are so many political foci: they were not set up as the result of a programme, but by virtue of the need to decide on a programme; they did not result from an agreement between leaders but from the right to hear the 'leaders' and be heard by them. Every authentic democracy has been able to find sovereign sites where each hierarchy comes to abolish itself before the equality of the discussion that is the basis of every hierarchy.

The Sorbonne became a public place. Since Greece, the public place has been the permanent birth-place of democracy.

The struggle for the existence of these new decision centres defines the time, the space and the mode of action of the revolutionary movement.

1 Time

No revolution is made at one stroke; a revolutionary takes the time to organize it. The May strikes inscribed in French reality the classic political progression that has been analysed by all the Marxist parti-

of Europe⁵⁹ since the 1905 Russian Revolution: strikes→general strike→political general strike→insurrectionary strike→Revolution. It is the scheme for a radical confrontation; even if the two opponents do not ascend to this extreme, it remains on the horizon of their struggle as a potentiality to which each camp, in despair of or hope for their cause, can appeal: "The combat is the only effective activity . . . it is even so when the combat does not actually take place."⁶⁰

The May movement outlined a tactic: political strike→change in régime . . . This 'peaceful road' never depends on the good intentions of just one of the opponents; the two must conceive the possibility of a violent confrontation and, as a function of its possible outcome, both reckon it preferable to act *as if* this combat had really taken place.

The paradox of May lies in the fact that if the combat had been real it would have swung to the advantage of the strikers, whereas, since it remained potential, the threat it outlined reinforced the State. The two opponents confronted one another in a single field but pursued two objectives: the State *restored* order, the proletariat had to *create* a new order or else return to its place in the old order.

The competition between these two orders may last, producing a period of *dual power*, as the Russian Revolution called it. *If* the factories had been occupied not by union cadres alone, as was most often the case, but by the workers as a whole, the latter could have kept an eye on all the negotiations not merely via the family television set but in the factory itself. Their representatives would then have been responsible to and revocable by the assembly of workers on strike. *Occupation* takes on its full meaning, which is not just to bar the factory to blacklegs and provocateurs, but to transform it into an autonomous and permanent decision centre. The direct, horizontal co-ordination of these different centres, the union achieved with other working strata (peasants, students, locality committees), alone allow the strike to last by organizing the strikers' lives (food, transport, interchange between town and country, re-opening of worker-controlled factories for strike needs, etc.).

The second power makes it possible to avoid the alternatives of submission or chaos that the State brandishes during the negotiations. Ten million strikers scattered in their homes *are* a strength they do not *have*: the parties dispose of it and, when the Communist Party demands the 'guarantee' of a programme common to all the left before it will act, it pretends to forget that the sole guarantee that the strikers can have is the organization of the strike by the strikers as a whole—without which any programme is mere paper about to become scraps.

The road to socialism passes by way of the organization of dual power. The more the workers, organized around co-ordinated decision centres, can intimidate the enemy with this added strength and control the political stages—parliamentary or otherwise—which the movement

⁵⁹ By Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin.

⁶⁰ Clausewitz, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

traverses, the more 'peaceful' this road will be. When Lenin, between February and October 1917, foresaw the possibility of a 'peaceful road' for the revolution, he was basing himself on the organization of the workers in decision centres ('Power to the Soviets') and not on the good intentions affected by all and sundry.

If time is not to slip through the strikers' hands, a massive and organized occupation is essential. Everywhere it took place, the strike held. When the Communist leadership succeeded in separating the unorganized masses and the 'safe' unionists (the latter the only occupants), and in cutting each factory off from its neighbours and the workers from the students, the strike was weak and without perspectives. The transformation of each factory into a decision centre, with the workers themselves taking charge of their co-ordination (sometimes the faculties acted as 'central offices'), is a precondition both for the resistance of the strike and for its advance.

Time is the régime's favourite argument: if the strike goes on, the examinations will not be held, the economy will suffer. Unless the strikers give themselves the time to transform both examinations and economy. Time belongs to the strike in so far as the strike belongs to the masses exercising their powers of decision.

2 *Space*

Meanwhile, each moment of the struggle is defined by a concrete relation of forces, the space of the struggle. The Latin Quarter is a social space populated by students. It is a political space in which the demonstrations of the extreme left carry with them the mass of the students, and the extreme right does not demonstrate without police protection. It is also a geographical space, small in Paris, minute in France. The geographical occupation of the Latin Quarter depends on the status of the rest of France; if all remains calm there, the police can invade.

Just as action develops dual power in time, it utilizes space for the organization of self-defence. The revolution smoulders in privileged hearths: the factories have always been such hearths—the schools, the universities and all the other points of contestation have been added today. The forces of order can occupy a factory or a faculty geographically, but they occupy it neither economically nor socially—they merely prevent its use.

There is no modern State if the factories and the universities do not function. The hearth places of contestation can no more be quenched than can the blast-furnaces or the research centres. Violent repression is necessarily limited; the insidious pressure which replaces it acts on a terrain necessarily hostile to it, in a society ripe for socialism.

The error of all the world's police is to confuse geographical space with social and political space. The repression 'buries' the 'grouplets', i.e. deepens their influence. By adding to each struggle for immediate de-

mands a struggle for the right to demand, the police intervention itself makes the action spring up again. The closure of Nanterre led to discussions in Paris; the police entry into the Sorbonne was followed by demonstrations and barricades; repression on the barricades led to strikes. The repression threatening the whole movement (the ban on demonstrations, the hunt for the grouplets) welded it together. The desire for expression predominates over the expression of divergences.

Such a retro-active mechanism does not work by moral virtue; the space hollowed out under repression is in itself a revolutionary situation. It is revealed at the very moment that repression masks it: if the State is defined by its monopoly of the 'legitimate' use of violence, the use made of this violence can in turn define the State and take away its legitimacy.

Geographical space is only decisive at the final moment of the final struggle, hence the tactical flexibility of a movement which chooses its ground without being nailed down to it. If night is falling on the society revealed in May, the fires of contestation will send each other their signals, while shadows circulate in the depths of long armed watches.

3 Development of the Action

The vertiginous spread of the May movement was fed by a multitude of separate but infectious initiatives. An action speaks three times: it is carried out *for* a precise objective, *against* those who stand in its way, *in relation* to the neutral spectators that it hopes to carry with it. The barricades of May 1968 had a perfectly clear aim (give us back the Sorbonne); they demonstrated the incoherent brutality of the régime and they shook wide strata of the population, above all the working class.

The action is extended simultaneously on all these three fronts. The aim is necessarily limited, in time and social space (the Sorbonne to the students, shouted the students at the beginning of May); it may expand progressively ('escalation' of the demands). The form of the action is much more immediately generalizable (the occupation of the Sorbonne an imitation of factory occupation, was in turn imitated in the factories). It is generally through its form that the action finds a ready echo (the young workers joining the students when the police attacked); but it is also through its form that the event can be neutralized by mass communications (newspapers, radio, TV). The spectacle of the repression causes a shock at first; the repetition of the spectacle, if the students' aim is not understood, may accustom the spectators to a 'small war' whose meaning is as foreign to them as the fight between cowboys and Indians.

The value of the action comes from its content, its form and its power to communicate. The mastery of these three aspects constitutes the essential problem of a tactic that must shock to attract attention and make itself understood to arouse support and infection; the exemplary and explosive character of the action is not given once and for all.

The last barricades were also used from this triple point of view—by the enemy camp. On Friday May 24th, while the majority of the students were demonstrating on the Right Bank (Bastille, Bourse, Opéra), the police forces closed all the bridges over the Seine save one—the Pont-Neuf—over which the demonstrators were made to return to the Latin Quarter, where repression was employed: for the restoration of order, *against* the 'pègre' of the Latin Quarter, *in relation to* the worried neutral spectators (worried, that is, both by the government and by the Communist newspapers which had taken up the government's formulations). The aim of the operation was to depoliticize the barricades; they were turned into the repetitive local folklore of the 'riots' in the Latin Quarter.

Once the university crisis became a nation-wide crisis, the students' violent struggle could only find a meaning and an objective by seeking to accelerate the nation-wide movement—which it did: the student demonstration of Friday 24th was larger than the one held two hours earlier by the CGT. Similarly, the meeting in the Charléty stadium (Monday 27th) was joined by an important number of young workers. In response, the CGT organized its own large-scale demonstration on Wednesday May 29th. The competition between the organizations temporarily reinforced the struggle.

This role as accelerator no longer worked once the Communist leadership took advantage of the projected elections to abandon the streets openly and bring the strikes to an end.

Hence the problem to be solved is how to master the three aspects of each action and co-ordinate them not only in the Latin Quarter, but on a national scale.

VI Organization

There is no single model of the revolutionary 'party', applicable in all times and situations.

If the May surprise had sufficed to bring about a change of régime, the analogy with the beginning of the Cuban Revolution would have been a striking one, with the legalistic Communist Party finding itself caught up in a movement in which it did not hold the initiative and for which it had no taste.

Henceforth, all the actors are forewarned. The régime and the PCF want to avoid a repetition of the events, so the revolutionary movement must face up to a double attack: the common struggle of the workers and students has made the violent repression which the PCF has always used against extreme-left groups more nuanced, but the régime has stepped into the gap.

This repression is still limited by the instability of the ruling equilibrium. Confronted with a veiled crisis internally (inflation, unemployment) as well as externally (monetary crisis), a government that needs order is in danger—under the pretext of establishing a rigorous form of

it—of re-igniting the 'disorder' whose extent it has discovered. For its part, the PCF cannot afford to lose all revolutionary gloss, lest it remain totally disarmed in a situation full of unknowns. The double threat of revolution and counter-revolution forces self-limitation on the repression.

Between the Communist leadership and the government reigns the immobility of a peaceful co-existence that is coupled with a balance of terror. The two are opposed to all initiatives. But it is not in their power to extinguish the sparks, any more than the existence of a war in Vietnam was avoided by the USA-USSR 'detente'.

On the other hand, they will co-operate to reduce and localize every conflict. The régime sets itself up as arbitrator by opposing one social stratum to another; the hard-pressed peasants are invited to contest . . . the strikers, the cause of the disorder. As for the Communist leadership it divides the struggles: the students must conduct their fight within their own arena, and are requested not to come disturbing the working class with their leftism.

There are fissures in the bloc formed by the two great forces of order which control the French political equilibrium, fissures through which a revolutionary movement could slip. And, beneath this equilibrium numberless *foci* of contestation that its task is to co-ordinate.

The Definition of the 'Party'

That every revolutionary movement is an alliance of spontaneous initiative and conscious organization, and that only these two elements together confer on the movement its *flexibility*—these are general principles.⁶¹ Adjusted to different circumstances, they have given rise to organizations of very diverse types.

There is no single model which is always and everywhere valid. Marx described as 'his' party variously the narrow circle of militants with the same theory as himself (sometimes the 'party' was reduced to Marx and Engels); or the workers' struggle as a whole—'the party arising spontaneously from the soil of modern society'—whatever the ephemeral organizations that might serve it as instruments.⁶² Engels assembled very dissimilar parties in the Second International, whereas Lenin did not hesitate to split each time he judged it necessary, calling for the

⁶¹ 'The *flexibility* required of a militant Social-Democratic organization, viz., the ability to adapt itself immediately to the most diverse and rapidly changing conditions of struggle, the ability, on the one hand, to avoid an open battle against an overwhelming enemy, when the enemy has concentrated all his forces at one spot and yet, on the other, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him when and where he least expects it. It would be a grievous error indeed to build the Party organization in anticipation only of outbreaks and street fighting, or only upon the forward march of the drab everyday struggle. We must *always* conduct our everyday work and always be prepared for every situation, because very frequently it is almost impossible to foresee when a period of outbreak will give way to a period of calm'. (Lenin: 'What is to be Done?', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 271).

⁶² Marx, Letter to Fredlignath, 1860, in Marx-Engels: *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow 1955, pp. 146-147.

'smashing' of the great workers' parties as soon as they had proved their incapacity and failure. There may be a contradiction between the interests of an existing party and the interests of the revolution; in the last resort it is not the party that judges the circumstances, but the circumstances that judge a party: 'Communists have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole.'⁶³

The Leninist party, clandestine and highly centralized, was explicitly conceived as an army manoeuvring on the very particular terrain of Tsarist Russia: 'Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia!'⁶⁴ Lenin was only able to build this adequate instrument because, from the outset in *What is to be Done?*, he had established the reference points that enabled him to distinguish between different types of circumstances and to adapt different 'party' forms to them. Every revolutionary movement is organized as a function of two principal criteria:

1. The nature of the enemy;
2. The goal of the movement (the kind of revolution it aims to achieve).

The nature of the enemy defines the forms of repression that a revolutionary movement must be able to outwit. As a general rule, the more violent the repression, the more clandestine must be the movement's organization, and the more effective the clandestine action of an active minority will be—not for forming 'conspiracies' but for taking up political action where the official authorities have placed it. By transforming every political problem into a police problem, the State metamorphoses all popular protest into violent confrontation; by forcing revolutionary organizations to become clandestine organizations, at one stroke it awakens the social forces that can shelter them and follow them—the history of the French Resistance suffices to remind us of this.

By its revolutionary goal a movement is not only differentiated from other organizations with which it may either ally itself or fight, depending on the circumstances; it is also distinguished as a 'party' by the scope of its tasks. An ordinary political party 'goes in for politics' within the framework of a given society; a revolutionary movement claims that it will change society, and leads a 'concentric attack' on three fronts: theoretical, political and economic.⁶⁵ The movement must both organize these three fronts and co-ordinate them 'concentrically'—this as a function of the forces in the field in each case.

The present revolutionary movement can only define its forms of organization—its 'party'—by analysing the relations of forces on each

⁶³ 'The Communist Manifesto', Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 46. Similarly: 'Of course, most of the Labour Party's members are working-men. However, whether a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics. Only this latter determines whether we really have before us a political party of the proletariat. Regarded from this, the only correct, point of view, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party . . . although made up of workers' (Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 257–258).

⁶⁴ Lenin: 'What is to be Done?' (1902), *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 229.

⁶⁵ Engels in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 653.

of these fronts, taking into account the two obstacles facing the French Revolution: repression by the régime and violent restraint by the Communist leadership. A quick examination of the battlefield should allow us to suggest its future development.

The Three Fronts

1 *The 'theoretical front'* (also traditionally called the 'ideological struggle') embraces two kinds of activity: the diffusion of revolutionary ideas, and the defence and development of theory (conceived as the theory of the struggle, 'a guide to action'). These are two aspects of the same work—one can only ever diffuse the ideas one has—but in each case the principal obstacle is different.

The diffusion of revolutionary themes and aims in our society is confronted by a new kind of censorship. The transformation of all action into a neutral spectacle, of public opinion into pure news and of politics into anecdote is what characterizes the effect of the present use of the means of mass communication (the popular press, radio, television, etc). The invention of unexpected means of action—'exemplary' and 'scandalous' in their form, which is effective because it is symbolic—constitutes the reply to the blocking of news and of the public mind. Hence the extraordinary infectiousness of this new type of massive diffusion of ideas censured by traditional 'mass communications'. This is the background to the influence of the critical analyses of Marcuse, the Situationists, etc, as it is for the examples provided by the American universities and the Japanese and German students (the anti-Springer campaign).⁶⁶

The theory that the movement defends and develops finds its immediate opponent in the present Communist leadership, given the intellectual incapacity which the latter cultivates and propagates. A re-reading of the last chapter of *The Communist Manifesto* shows one that all the Socialist and Communist literatures that Marx criticized suffers from a single vice, concealed in a multitude of ways: it forgets the revolution. While the Communist leadership was painting its picture of the New Jerusalem that was to carry it to victory in the next elections, the critical study of the successes, failures and obstacles that characterize the revolutions of the 20th century was undertaken. The meeting between the portraits of Marx and Lenin, but also of Trotsky, Mao and Castro in the Sorbonne courtyard was not just a sentimental demonstration; it implied the will to understand the form taken by the class struggle today, and to rise 'to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole'.⁶⁷

In these two respects, this theoretical front is held by the extreme-left

⁶⁶ 'During months of theoretical discussion we realized that the bourgeois democracy we live in is characterized precisely by the fact that it allows the Lord to take his dog for a walk and allows protests against the Vietnam War, but directs them. This theoretical assessment of the integrating mechanisms of existing society allowed us to see clearly that this unreasonable democracy's rules of the game are not our rules and that for us the starting-point for the politicization of students must be the conscious destruction of these rules of the game', Rudi Dutschke: *Essays on politics*.

⁶⁷ 'The Communist Manifesto', Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 43.

'grouplets' (students' and workers' groups). The discussions that separate them led the main groups to an involuntary division of labour—some cultivating the invention of new forms of action, others insisting on a particular content for the action. Their divergencies should not obscure the fact that through them, for the first time for decades, a vanguard is taking part in the discussions of the international movement instead of merely suffering their consequences. The French road to socialism will be prepared by a critical reflection on the history, strength and situation of the workers' movement in France and in Europe. It will enrich itself by comparing all experience everywhere in the world—not by following faithfully all the detours of Moscow's international policy, adding the most vulgar traditions of French national parliamentarianism and tying the whole together with vague opinion surveys.

2 *The political front* has been altered as a direct effect of the conquest of initiative on the theoretical plane. Throwing off the fetters of tailism, the revolutionary movement has revealed the effectiveness of new forms of action and the existence of previously hidden revolutionary forces. Although the majority of the grouplets played a very important practical role (as marshals; in the education of cadres; as contacts and co-ordinators, etc), their most important contribution was their theoretical activity. They dared to discuss the problems of Marxism and the class struggle without taking any notice of the official orthodoxy and without asking for the sanction of the Communist leadership; they freed the (political) 'initiative of the masses'.

Actions did not need to be remote-controlled by a central apparatus; invention is infectious. In a society ripe for socialism, the advance of the revolution and the initiation of the withering away of the State go hand in hand. The action committees in the wards and factories, the elected strike committees, and the various kinds of contestation centre, themselves determined their own forms of organization and their own original initiatives. A revolutionary movement does not need to be organized as a second State apparatus; its task is not to direct but to co-ordinate these autonomous centres into a network (on the model of the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets of 1917).

The working class is and remains the principal strength of any revolutionary movement. The extreme rapidity with which the strike spread shows that the workers reacted as workers, not as 'consumers'; in other words, their class position defined them much more profoundly than their 'integration' into a so-called consumer society.

The force which carried the working class with it was that of the young workers. Rarely union members, unorganized—even though teen-age gangs are primitive forms of organization—they frequently launched the strikes, joined the demonstrations and meetings of the students, took the hardest line on the return to work. The Communist organizations have little influence on the young workers; the *Jeunes Communistes* (like the UJRF before it) are too closely watched by the Party to accept their spirit of initiative.

The May battle drew forces into action that were organized but not revolutionary, and others that were revolutionary but unorganized. This is the essential problem of the revolutionary movement.

3 *The economic front*: a revolutionary movement cannot substitute itself for the trade unions, nor the latter for the former. However, the economic struggle is not isolated: in any crisis situation, the strike is an essential weapon.

The way in which the strike is organized underpins the political situation; by 'advising' the workers in occupied factories to return to their homes and leave only their union delegates to man the strike pickets, the union officials often weakened and defused the movement from the outset.

The way in which the strike develops gives the general situation its perspectives or absence of perspectives. The workers were able to reject the Grenelle agreements negotiated by their unions; they could not substitute a new leadership for their nerveless existing leadership.

The strike ended under pressure from the top leadership of the union: (particularly the CGT); this was exerted both at the informational level (the content of the final agreements was not clearly stated, mere assurances from the employers were regarded as signed agreements, etc.) and at the level of co-ordination (the central delegates toured the factories to see that they voted for a return to work, and gave false accounts of the return in other factories—You are the last, etc. . .).

The political effect of a general struggle for workers' demands is obvious to everyone. Under the pretext that they were taking this into account, the union leaders drew closer to the political parties (CGT-PCF; CFDT-Mendès-France; UNEF-PSU). The consequences were the opposite: they added political competition to the existing inter-union quarrels. Instead of claiming to 'lead' the strike or to 'give the lead' in the field of politics, they should allow the workers to determine both—by creating strike committees elected and revocable by the general assembly of strikers in each firm, and then by federating these committees on a regional and national scale.

The revolutionary movement should not substitute itself for the trade unions—which, on the contrary, it wants to strengthen—but it must not allow the unions to substitute their own decisions for those of the workers on strike.

The Party as Problem

Two powers restrain the revolutionary movement: the power of the State and the Communist leadership. The latter has at its disposal mass movements (party, trade union), but it does not have a monopoly of initiative (the young workers escape it). The weakness of the PCF lies in its theoretical nullity and its parliamentarianization; in an offensive period, it fears, correctly, that it will lose 'control' of the working class and allow itself to be outflanked by a more combative and influential

vanguard than itself. It derives its strength from the fact that it is the only mass organization claiming to be revolutionary and Marxist; for lack of anything better the working class accepts it, since no defence is possible without organization.

Hence the necessity to oppose organization to organization. Given that the Communist Party is swept along by revolutionary offensives without taking the lead in them, it is also incapable of giving the signal for a justifiable retreat—since it gives this signal at every pretext. Centres are necessary: not to ‘make’ a revolution, but to co-ordinate it.

However, there are three objections to the construction of a centralized party that would direct the struggle ‘concentrically’ on all three fronts:

1 *The time*: the creation of a party is a long-term business; it is essential to be able to provide the time for discussion of the theoretical principles, the forms of organization, centralism and democracy, the general political line, special cases, etc: ‘The tactics of agitation in relation to some special question . . . may be changed in 24 hours; but only people devoid of all principles are capable of changing, in 24 hours, or, for that matter in twenty-four months, their view on the necessity . . . of an organization . . . It is too late to form the organization (the Party) in times of explosions and outbursts.’⁶⁸

2 *The form*: the French workers’ parties have left behind them a strong tradition of bureaucratic inefficiency. No one escapes this at will, no one is immunized against it: neither the old militants who unconsciously bear the weight of fixed habits; nor the new militants who, even if they contest, then have no experience of any other mass organization than those that already exist—whence the power of these ‘models’. Similarly, the healthy mistrust that bureaucratic organizations have aroused in the working class, among the students and so on, does not disappear once a party proclaims that it is ‘new’ and adds the label ‘revolutionary’.

3 *The situation*: co-ordination of the revolutionary movement and the elaboration of general perspectives are necessary, and this necessity is felt. On the other hand, the urgent need for a highly centralized and hierarchized party is at present disputable and disputed; the revolution’s weapon against the authoritarian and hierarchized State is the explosion of initiative at all levels. In a society ripe for socialism, counter-power is created by the multiplication of centres first of contestation and then of decision which paralyse the central State power. The tasks for a ‘General Staff’ of the revolution are therefore much smaller, the masses’ control greater, the task of the ‘parties’ less.

The party’s work consisted in orienting the struggle on the three fronts, and in directing the ‘concentration’ of all three fights onto a single objective—revolution. How can these operations be performed in the absence—temporary or definitive—of such a party? The answer must be formulated according to the circumstances: either the revolutionary movement can develop openly, or else repression forces it underground.

⁶⁸ Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 18.

Open Struggle

There are revolutions which occur without a leading party, and perhaps this will be the case in France. Bolshevik monolithism was adapted to the conditions of extreme repression organized by the Tsarist police. If—as a hypothesis—we exclude this feature, what can we say about the French situation?

The Communist leadership defends two monopolies: its own—the monopoly it exercises at home by proclaiming itself the only revolutionary force; and the monopoly in Europe of the USSR conceived as the 'fatherland' of socialism and as a privileged model of the socialist State.

The PCF will not lightly abandon either of these; it clings to its image as the most 'revolutionary' party in France, just as it clings to the idea that France is one of the least revolutionary countries in Europe. It is impossible to imagine a victory of socialism without the militants and cadres of the PCF being forced by events to re-solve the contradiction which they are without knowing it. This crisis is not the effect of a metaphysical or moral fatality; it is inevitable, by simple logic, when a living contradiction is projected into turbulent life.

The extreme-left groups of students and workers have formed, and do form nuclei of militants capable of thinking and defending a revolutionary line (e.g. the JCR, UJCM-L, VO). They are able to group round them the most conscious workers and the cadres (trade-unionists, political, technical and scientific personnel) who have participated in the contestation movement. This grouping is not conceived as an embryonic mass party, nor as a highly centralized party practising a quasi-military Bolshevik-style discipline. It is rather a matter of work-teams which bring together 'specialists' capable of defining the most urgent technical tasks of the revolution (of the economy, of self-defence, etc). On the front of theoretical activity, plans of action can be established which make it possible to master the variable circumstances and the urgency of the tasks to be carried out.

On the front of political struggle, the organizational tasks are more difficult to resolve. In the absence of a revolutionary party, the development of common action by workers and students represents an important strength. The growing radiation of the 'grouplets' within the working class, the action committee networks, the creation of a nation-wide press (*Action*, etc), are the elements of a solution as yet only adumbrated. The manipulation of the mass organizations by the Communist leadership is best opposed by mass movements that it cannot manipulate. Perhaps it is not impossible to predict what they will be like. Working-class and student youth was the vanguard in the battle of May. It embodied both its popular aspect and its revolutionary style.

The economic, social and political situation and the aspirations of this youth will, if the opportunity arises, make it the element of revolutionary action. The Communist bureaucracy has never been able to organize a large and revolutionary youth movement in any stable manner,

although crises have produced such organizations very quickly (FURP in 1944). It is probably here, in this weakest link of the bureaucracy, that a mass organization will emerge capable of counter-balancing the PCF's restraint; the Charléty meeting was a rehearsal for it (by the nature of the attendance) as well as a lost opportunity (because of the narrow PSU perspectives of the UNEF leaders).⁶⁹

Such a youth movement could considerably reinforce the young trade unionists in their struggle against the union bureaucracies, just as the 'theoretical' work-teams can assist authentically revolutionary cadres. The situation on the economic front would be so much the better for it.

This set of possibilities defines the strategic hypothesis of a socialist revolution which is not a seizure of power by *one* revolutionary party. If the plurality of political parties survive, their action will be determined simply by a programme resulting from negotiations between the various leaderships under the surveillance and pressure of the workers; the autonomous and co-ordinated decision centres (e.g. the strike committees and action committees) would then exercise a permanent right of initiative and control—the associated producers would have available to them the instruments of reflection, organization and information which would preserve their power of decision. The road to socialism passes through the stage of dual power.

Clandestine Struggle

The nature of the revolutionary organization is also a function of the enemy it confronts—and of the different repressions against which it has to defend itself.

Police activity, if it aims to become generalized so as to cut all the roots of the revolutionary movement, will rapidly transform the whole French political situation. Far from healing, the nation-wide 'crisis' will deepen; the struggle for democracy and the struggle for the socialist revolution will become all the more quickly identified in the political consciousness of the masses, alerted since the general strike.

In this case, legal organization of the movement is more difficult and less necessary. The contestation centres that have arisen spontaneously will survive—to suppress them would be to change economy and society—but, faced with repression, their initiatives immediately take on the significance of a revolutionary resistance. The political situation

⁶⁹ The kind of grouping invented at Nanterre under the name 'March 22nd Movement' seems the sole conceivable form of youth movement: its 'militants' were defined by precise actions, and did not claim to be a theoretical vanguard armed with a general line (it mixed together unorganized individuals and others organized in different tendencies: pro-Chinese—УЧК-Л; Trotskyite—ЖКР; and anarchists). Bureaucratic organization was reduced to a minimum, as the awkwardness of a 'leadership' was replaced by a simple co-ordination of autonomous groups: '*Tout le monde est Cohn-Bendit*'. Hence a freedom of initiative and language without which the union of students with young workers will not be achieved. Whatever their provisional difficulties, deaths and resurrections, movements of this new type, which have also appeared in other countries (the SDS), are the strike-force of the 'contestation'.

approximates much more to the model of Tsarist Russia—hence the Leninist type of party, highly centralized, hierarchized and concealed would be on the agenda. The strategy of a clandestine revolutionary movement is well-known; good Lenin readers and minority vanguard exist; so too does a working class that has just tested its power, strong in its traditions and distrustful of its present leaders. The situation is still explosive.

Faced with a slide towards fascism, revolutionary organizations do not wonder *if* the explosion will take place—which is self-evident—no *when*—which can never be known. The two appropriate theoretical activities are the study of what Marx called ‘the art of insurrection’ (e.g. October 1917), and what Lenin conceived as the ‘science of retreat’ (e.g. 1906, Brest-Litovsk, NEP). The danger may appear not that the explosion will not occur, but that it will occur too soon; it is inevitable. Revolutionaries do not decide on revolutions at will; the Communists seemed premature to Marx, but this did not make him affirm any the less strongly that he could not but support it once it had broken out.⁷⁰ Attempting to control this danger involves grouping together and tempering militants capable of leading an assault, conducting an active defence and organizing a temporary retreat. In France, the relation between retreat and offensive will be determined by the state of the nation-wide crisis (economic and political), of the crisis in the PCF of the mobilization of the revolutionary forces and of the demoralization of the enemy.

In this respect:

‘Propaganda was in the forefront so long as and to the extent that the question was (and in so far as it still is) one of winning over the vanguard of the proletariat to communism; even propaganda circles, with all the defects of the circle spirit, are useful under these conditions and produce fruitful results. But when it is a question of practical action by the masses, of the disposition, if one may so express it, of vast armies, of the alignment of *all* the class forces of the given society for the *final and decisive battle*, then propaganda habits alone, the mere repetitions of the truths of ‘pure’ communism, are of no avail. In these circumstances we must not only ask ourselves whether we have convinced the vanguard of the revolutionary class, but also whether the historically effective forces of *all* classes—positively of all the classes of the given

⁷⁰ In his Preface to the Russian translation of Karl Marx’s Letters to Dr Kugelmann, Lenin wrote: ‘In September 1870, six months before the Commune, Marx gave a direct warning to the French workers: insurrection would be an act of desperate folly, he said in the well-known Address of the International. He exposed in advance the nationalistic illusions of the possibility of a movement in the spirit of 1792 . . . But when the masses rose, Marx wanted to march with them, to learn with them in the process of the struggle, and not to give them bureaucratic admonitions. He realised that to attempt in advance to calculate the chances *with complete accuracy* would be quackery or hopeless pendency. What he wanted *above everything else* was that the working class heroically and self-sacrificingly took the initiative in *making* world history. Marx regarded world history from the standpoint of those who *make* it without being in a position to calculate the chances *infallibly* beforehand, and not from the standpoint of an intellectual philistine who moralizes: “It was easy to foresee . . . they should not have taken up . . .”’ (Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 108–109 and 111).

society without exception—are aligned in such a way that everything has fully matured for the decisive battle; in such a way that 1. all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with one another, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; 2. all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and 3. among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has emerged and begun to grow vigorously. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and briefly outlined above, and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured. . . .

‘Great Britain offers an example. We cannot tell, and no one can tell beforehand, how soon a real proletarian revolution will flare up there, and *what immediate cause* will most serve to rouse, kindle, and impel into the struggle the very wide masses who are at present dormant. Hence, it is our duty to carry on all our preparatory work in such a way as to be well shod on all four feet (as the late Plekhanov, when he was a Marxist and revolutionary, was fond of saying). It is possible that the ‘breach’ will be forced, the ‘ice broken’ by a parliamentary crisis, or by a crisis arising out of the colonial and imperialist contradictions, which are hopelessly entangled and are becoming increasingly painful and acute, or perhaps by some third cause, etc. We are not discussing the kind of struggle that will *determine* the fate of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain (not a single Communist has any doubt on that score; for all of us this question is settled, and settled definitively); what we are discussing is the *immediate cause* that will bring into motion the at present dormant proletarian masses and lead them directly to revolution. Let us not forget that in the French bourgeois republic, for example, in a situation which from both the international and national aspect was a hundred times less revolutionary than the present, such an ‘unexpected’ and ‘petty’ immediate cause as one of the many thousands of fraudulent tricks of the reactionary military caste (the Dreyfus case) was enough to bring the people to the brink of civil war!’⁷¹

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Marxist political thought distinguishes two strategic dead-ends: ‘leftist’ adventurism (‘basing a revolutionary tactic on revolutionary feelings alone’; attack everywhere and always) and rightist opportunism (‘revisionism’; retreat always and everywhere). Dialecticians add that these two errors can sometimes complement one another (‘he who would be beauty becomes the beast’).

The official thinkers of the PCF who presume to condemn the vanguard of the May movement by classifying it as ‘leftist’ have transformed a strategic rule into a moral precept. Lenin did not recommend a ‘middle way’ between right and left deviations like the road the good Christian

⁷¹ Lenin: ‘Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder’, *Selected Works*, Vol. III, pp. 438–439 and 441–442.

tries to take between the temptations of the flesh and those of the spirit. It is in relation to a revolutionary road that right and left errors appear as forms of 'doctrinalism' (cult of words, absence of strategy). The religion of the 'parliamentary road to socialism' points to the PCF (rightist) desire to prohibit a revolution in France. On the other hand, the term 'leftist' could be applied to an attempted revolution that was unable to develop the forms of mass action that were the strength of the May movement.

Any revolutionary explosion in France will be determined by the convergence of students and young workers within a single vanguard. It is as a function of this basic strategic problem that organizational questions are posed. There is no single, eternal model of the 'party'. If mass movement of revolutionary youth has emerged, it is to cope with the obstructions of the political and trade-union apparatuses employed by the Communist leadership; if a highly centralized clandestine organization proves necessary, it will be to withstand fascist repression. In May an original form of grouping was adumbrated—a 'party' in the wide sense Marx sometimes used—i.e. the coalescence of the active committee networks, the 'groupelets' and the specialized study commissions and committees around a minimum revolutionary platform. A concentration of forces and the establishment of a common strategy do not imply the abolition of ideological debate, nor the disappearance of the power of initiative which has begun everywhere to gnaw away at the highly centralized apparatuses of the State and official party bureaucracies. Only the definition of the most urgent tasks of revolution.

'What is past is prologue'

**The excitements of Blackpool are but
the latest chapters in a long story.
For the earlier chapters—the essential
background—turn to two new books:**

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE LABOUR PARTY

by Henry Pelling

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tionary action can co-ordinate the multiplicity of the initiatives, and the latter will remain relatively decentralized: anti-repressive, they are only meaningful as inaugurating the withering away of the centralized bourgeois State. Compared to Russia in 1917, France in 1968 is economically and socially ripe for socialism; it does not seem that its political preparation will necessarily have to adopt the model of the Bolshevik 'party'.

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There are two—complementary—ways of investigating a battlefield. One can define either the basic forces which confront one another upon it, or the way in which these conduct the confrontation. The second point of view has governed the whole of this introduction, which is therefore incomplete. Everything I have said of the *nature* of the forces in the field has been deduced from their conduct; the brevity of this essay prevents me from complementing these remarks now by an economic and social analysis.

Lenin—hardly to be suspected of 'neglecting the economy'—bears witness to the fact that it is possible to link together a number of coherent thoughts within such a framework; he devoted several volumes to the study of the 'tactics' of the various political parties.⁷² Whether the links are really coherent the reader must decide.

These pages are no more than an introduction: a collection of ideas designed to seize a movement in its flight and try to analyse whence it came, whither it might lead, and whom it reveals.

To complete the picture of this battlefield, a theory of immobility would have to be added. The movement confronts a doubly blocked opponent:

—economically: the interdependence of the Western economies restricts each one's possibility of carrying out a 'social' policy. Mechanisms exist that allow a capitalist economy to absorb a sharp rise in wages on the national scale; the international effect of these classical techniques is at present dangerous, the example of English 'socialism' shows this. To explain why, one must analyse the intense competition

⁷² 'By the Party's tactics we mean the Party's political conduct, or the character, direction and methods of its political activity' ('Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution', *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 492). Soldiers and mathematicians would say strategy rather than tactics. 'In order concretely to determine the tactics of a revolutionary party at the stormiest moments of the general crisis which the country is living through, it is obviously insufficient merely to indicate the classes capable of acting in the spirit of a victorious completion of the revolution. Revolutionary periods are distinguished from periods of so-called peaceful development . . . precisely in this: that the *forms* of struggle in periods of the first type inevitably are *much more varied*, and the direct revolutionary struggle of the masses predominate rather than the propaganda and agitation activities conducted by leaders in parliament, in the press, etc. Therefore, if, in assessing revolutionary periods, we confine ourselves to defining the *line* of activity of the various classes, without analysing the *forms* of their struggle, our discussion in the scientific sense will be incomplete and undialectical, while from the standpoint of practical politics it will degenerate into the *dead letter of the raisonneur* (with which, we may say in parenthesis, comrade Plekhanov contents himself in nine-tenths of his writings . . .)', *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, p. 55.

that reigns both at the level of exports and at that of the world capital market (investments). The play of international rivalries is dramatized by the monetary crisis and the threat of a world economic crisis that raises. Each power is trying to secure its position: effective externally, the economic policy of the Fifth French Republic favoured a brut confrontation internally. The contradiction, which is not specific to Gaullism, remains; so do its effects. Whoever wishes to withstand world capitalist competition must immobilize social movement in his own country (De Gaulle); whoever fails to immobilize workers' demands internally is immobilized externally (Wilson). The margin for manoeuvre in the capitalist economy is narrower today than it was in the Popular Front period.

—politically: the stability and the strong executive required by capitalist economy can, in France, only be found on the right. The combativity of the working class, its revolutionary traditions, undermine every left-parliamentary solution (in any case, the example of the other West European powers is enough to confirm that there is no preferable centre or centre-left solution; the case of Germany, dominated by its past and brooding over its national problem, is a special one. When social contestation becomes a threat, the political game is immobilized on the right, in a strong executive outside the traditional parties. The State is the (natural) instrument for this barrier to the 'parliamentary road'; it makes France 'the land where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to decision.'⁷³

The collision of the movement with these barriers has produced crisis, and the depth of the movement and permanence of the barrier lead to a repetition of the crisis: the horizon is revolution, or counter revolution.

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Its inability to imagine a revolution in an economically 'advanced' country in the 20th century is the blindspot of the ruling system of ideas. The movement (Marx himself condensed under this name the long preparation for the revolution as well as the event itself) is still in many respects the unthought of.

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On the right—virtual centre of an absence of ideas policed by respect for order and ordered by the police—the movement is pure disorder, a spectre haunting the European bourgeoisie, a form without content that the latter fills out with its mesmerized dreads and that it only names with insults.

On the left, the movement is taken for an effect, not a cause: the 'crisis of the régime' produced the *événements* (was it not the raging beginning of a social revolution that brought the political régime into question?) 'The socialistic bourgeoisie want all the advantages of modern social conditions without the struggles and dangers necessarily resulting

⁷³ Engels in Marx-Engels: *Selected Works*, Vol. I, p. 245.

We open this issue of NLR with two articles on the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and the social process which it was designed to crush. Hans-Jürgen Krahel, a leading member of the German SDS, traces the dialectic of the January reforms in Prague, in an uncompromising political analysis of the role of the different forces involved. After years of total repression, class struggle was once again unleashed in the open light of day in Czechoslovakia. The objective of the Russian military occupation was to liquidate it—guaranteeing the economic decentralization promoted by privileged technocrats, destroying the civic liberties achieved by the intelligentsia and trampling on the repoliticization of the working-class which was their largely unintended consequence. Absolute condemnation of the Russian occupation by socialists, as Krahel points out, does not mean approval of regression to the classical bourgeois institutions of parliament and market in Czechoslovakia; the revolutionary road forward was and is precisely the abolition of the separation between 'economy' and 'politics' which they incarnate, by the creation of genuine institutions of working-class democracy—soviets. The role of students, as in Western Europe, is potentially critical in this. Since November, they have pioneered forms of mass struggle against the occupying power and its collaborators, materially assisting the socialist reawakening of the Czechoslovak proletariat. A member of Prague University has sent us an account of the student strike which swept the country after the invasion—proof if it were needed that struggle has not been obliterated by the Russian armies.

The Manifesto of the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation, adopted at its Second Conference, speaks of the need to build 'red bases' in British colleges and universities. What might this mean in forms of concrete action? Four militants of the federation discuss the problem from various standpoints. The limits and possibilities of student struggle are a question for the whole Left, and have been diversely assessed in contri-

butions to NLR 44 and 50. An experimental debate on tactics is an essential moment of any new practice.

Ever since Engels' famous 1890 letter to Conrad Schmidt, Marxists have argued over the extent to which political or other superstructures can be autonomous from their economic base. Andrew Asheron's study of the function of racism in South African capitalist society is directed against the economism of the reformist thesis that the march of economic progress will inevitably sweep away the whole framework of Apartheid as an obstacle to the rationale of capitalist development. He sets South African racialism in its historical context, and shows that the political superstructures of the Apartheid system can only be broken by revolutionary mass struggle. As the guerrilla expands within South African frontiers, and as South Africa's economic empire stretches northward engulfing peoples who will fight as well as economic resources which can be exploited, the day of reckoning for the settler regime will be brought nearer. The militancy of the January demonstrations in London against the Smith-Vorster regimes was an example of the solidarity which it is the duty of socialists to develop internationally on an ever-wider scale.

The Cultural Revolution, involving the mass eruption into political struggle of millions of Chinese, is obviously a process of world-wide importance. Analysis is rendered difficult by the extreme paucity of reputable information of the most basic kind. We have been lucky to be able to publish John Collier's eye-witness accounts of the pattern of events in Canton (NLR 48 and 50), and are following it in the present issue with a contribution to the controversy on the meaning of the Cultural Revolution by Bill Jenner, who examines the roots of recent developments in the previous social history of China. Later in the year, we will be publishing our own analysis.

*Czechoslovakia:
the Dialectic of the 'Reforms'*

'Lenin awake, Brezhnev has gone mad!' This inscription on the walls of Prague during the first days of the occupation reveals the caricatural truth of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Anti-communism, scenting an unexpected advantage, at once whipped up the invasion hysterically into a Russian Vietnam. The clouded, ahistorical consciousness of the West German liberal Press proclaimed it to be a second edition of the Soviet act of force in Hungary 1956. In reality it belongs to just that historical constellation (a moment of a process still meaninglessly unfurling through natural contingency) which provided the philosophical point of departure for Marx's presentation of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*: 'Hegel somewhere observes that all great world historical events and individuals occur in a manner of speaking twice over. He omitted to add: once as tragedy, the second time as farce.'¹ Prague 1968 reflects the tragedy of Budapest 1956 as farce. The heroes of 1956 were executed, while those of 1968 came home in tears. The reformer-hero Dubček may have been

threatened with liquidation; yet his Russian hosts contented themselves thereafter with treating him to handcuffs and cold meals. Meanwhile in the streets of Prague isolated angry teenagers who resisted the occupation were gunned down. The 'Hero of the USSR' and grey-haired popular idol Svoboda, in Prague a Russian prisoner, was received in Moscow with the full diplomatic honours due to a Head of State and a counterfeited kiss of brotherhood. But this *grotesque* of corridor-politics among the ruling State functionaries (a product of haggling and blackmail) appeared to the betrayed and bartered mass of the Czechoslovak population as a brutal, Stalinist natural catastrophe. They resisted it with a traditional spontaneity and tactical skill. August 21st was the Eighteenth Brumaire of Russian foreign policy.

1. Popular Nationalism

The resistance to the occupation was marked by the same ambivalence of political and historical consciousness that frequently surfaced during the reform period. This ambiguity objectified the liberal need for civic freedoms—a need traceable to the class position of the intellectuals and students who were the principal audience of the reform movement. This need derived essentially from a past phase of bourgeois emancipation, and it involved neither the ability, nor any desire, to activate an adequate proletarian class consciousness. Under the forced conditions of the military invasion, the popular will to resistance inevitably radicalized intellectual and journalistic liberalism, and its mass component thrusting towards the goal of sovereignty, into an intransigent national consciousness—just such a national consciousness as was historically generated in revolutionary periods of bourgeois politics. The ideological content of this nationalist resistance became diffused among the population as a growing indifference to Communism (without, however, the basic option for a socialist mode of production being as a rule put in question.) It became diffused too in the ever-widening demand for neutrality, and in the restriction of protest against the Russian invasion merely to the principle of national sovereignty, of the non-interference of foreign powers in the *internal affairs* of another country.

On the other hand, the determination of the workers to strike gave embryonic expression to the practical necessity, still disguised by false consciousness, of pursuing the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat (whose dictatorship had until that time been administratively confiscated) even on the material basis of nationalized production.

It was inevitable that the ruling 'Reform Group' around Dubček would attempt to divide and impede the resistance of the masses—not only in view of the massive Russian pressure, but also in view of their own political aims and ruling interests. The ceaseless calls to act with prudence and—as a citizen's first duty—to preserve order may have been genuinely motivated by a sincere fear, that should not be dismissed, of the danger of bloody suppression of an angry insurrection; nevertheless the fact is that they functioned to prevent the population from forming autonomous organs of resistance. The institutions of the

¹ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, S.W. Vol. I. P. 247

working class, in the name of reform, behaved in a way typical of revisionist mass organizations: the verbally radical proclamation of an unlimited general strike was, in fact, followed by its fragmentation into a series of short strikes—a well-tested device, employed with virtuosity for years by the French Communist Party among others, for placating the workers' will to struggle and simultaneously canalizing and controlling it.

The 'Moscow Diktat' which the demoralized reformers brought back to Prague was an obvious provocation to the nationalistic mood of the masses, which excluded any line of political compromise. 'Betrayal' was the immediate, spontaneous reaction to the communiqué of August 27th; for the first time Dubček was not extolled unanimously and uncritically. The Russians had forced the functionaries of reform into the role of collaborators. Organization of resistance was no longer on their agenda—only a demobilizing appeal to the masses not to lose faith in the leadership. It is too early to make out whether the Moscow Diktat has helped to demote the reformers around Dubček from their heroes' pedestals, and hence to free the population from its illusions. For the time being at least the ideology of calm, order, and trust in the rulers has proved strong enough to discipline the masses.

2. Liberal Reformism

The contradictory nature of the post-Stalinist reforms, condensed in the programmatic formula of *democratic socialism*, was abruptly revealed in the Prague students' revolt of 1967. The protests of the students against the brutal police rule of the Novotný régime were limited for the most part to demands for constitutional guarantees and liberalization of the press. At the same time they apologized to the US ambassador in Prague for a demonstration by their North Vietnamese comrades, because the US flag had been torn down from the embassy.² The social content of the reform movement was articulated by intellectuals and students, and its practical self-definition reproduced classical liberalism. Its conception of *democratic socialism* was itself still affected by the Stalinist autonomy of the State machine from which it sought to free itself. The historically distorted idea which underlay the movement was that an étatistic, economist reduction of the socialist mode of production and exchange to an administrative collectivity had occurred; and that consequently the *principium individuationis* of the liberal phase of bourgeois society was unable to blossom in any material sense, but had been liquidated as a function of control. The syncretic global opinion that the revolutionary theory of the proletariat and still more its praxis sought to throttle the autonomous individual for the sake of the uniform collectivity, corresponded negatively to the pressing need of the reformist intelligentsia for socialism and 'individual freedom' to be compatible. It was seen as confirmed in practice by Stalinism and convergent theoretically with liberal ideology. In this conception there survived the capitalist separation of collective species and single individual—a separation which was the object of a philosophical critique in Marx's early writings that was fundamental in the formation of historical materialism. The reforms in Czechoslovakia aimed to top off

² Hans Magnus Enzensberger in Kursbuch 13, 1968, p. 106-7.

nationalized production with a liberal-democratic superstructure—a superstructure whose emancipatory content (freedom of the press, of opinion, of association) was wholly derived from a long-vanished phase in the formation of bourgeois society. In that phase of its historical dynamic, the institutionalized fiction of the autonomous, self-sufficient juridical person—embodiment of bourgeois individuality—revealed itself as a pure abstraction of the socially necessary outward appearance of commodity exchange, under cover of which the material power of the economic surplus held unrestricted sway. It is only Marx's strategic conception of a socialization of the means of production that can free the principle of bourgeois individualism from the purely abstract existence of the character-masks of commodity ownership, and liberate the competing wage-labourers from the social desolation of their atomism. But this idea has been transformed in the heads of Yugoslav and Czechoslovak philosophers of reform into, at best, the mutilated form of diluted existential, ontological or phenomenological versions of Marx's theory of alienation, and into the emasculated world-view of a 'humanistic image of man' supposedly enunciated by Marx. These theorists fail to understand that communism according to Marx Engels aims at the 'production of the form of exchange itself.'³ This means that the present productive relations of abstract labour, which isolate private producers one from another, must be destroyed in the course of a socialization achieved through revolutionary struggle. They must be destroyed in order to make possible the 'collective mode of production' of direct producers, and finally that of the unconstrained 'association of free men'. The false notion that the new socialist mode of production should be propped up by the old liberal institutions generated the feeble idealism in theory and the blind revisionism in practice of the post-Stalinist reforms in Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak reform movement's rational interest in liberalization was only able to express itself in the ideologically deformed conception of a restoration of 'republican' freedoms. It clothed itself in the worn garments of the petrified conceptual world of the liberal State, long since rendered repressive by the dynamic of neo-capitalist concentration. This conceptual world finds its legitimation in the bourgeois 'Realm of Ethics'—in those unrestricted social relations that correspond to the sphere of circulation of commodities, in which according to Marx 'Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham' hold sway. The diminution of free competition between property-owners of equal status and worth—a consequence of the monopolistic depersonalization of the market—has deprived the sphere of circulation of its power of ethical legitimation.⁴ Historically, this has resulted in the structural transformation under neo-capitalism of the liberal, constitutional State into the authoritarian welfare State.

The ideology of the Prague reforms failed to achieve any awareness of the contradiction between the material base of a nationalized ownership of the means of production and a liberal superstructure. It was in the Hegelian sense badly and anachronistically idealistic, in so far as it

³ Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *The German* pp. 86ff.

⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 175-6; also loc. cit pp. 84ff; *Grundrisse* pp. 153ff.

sought to combine two mutually incompatible historical moments—the new rational principle with the mature substance of the old ethic⁵. The post-Stalinist reforms in Czechoslovakia represented an ahistorical transference of the historically new, still undeveloped and éstatistically distorted principle of the socialist mode of production onto the old and withered substance of bourgeois social relations.

3. Eastern Europe and World Revolution

The idealist liberalism of the intellectuals and students and the economic reformism of the technocrats at the head of Party and State reinforced each other. It was in no way coincidental that the reformers mobilized the universities and press of the country in January with the promise of political emancipation, in order to gain control of State power and carry through economic reorganization. For economic 'de-stalinization' was to be executed at the expense of the working class. The administratively hypostatized planning of the Novotny period had shown itself incapable of resolving the critical imbalances and stagnation of 1962–65. The reforming group which emerged in the course of intra-bureaucratic power-struggles in the party leadership drew the technocratic conclusions that two innovations were historically indispensable: 1. increased managerial autonomy, masking authoritarian control over the producers by an institutionalized ideology of participation, and 2. technological rationalization of the industrial machine, even at the cost of an extremely high level of unemployment. The decisive issue for them was the regulation and stabilization of market and price mechanisms. It is true that the State abolition of private ownership of the means of production was not in principle revoked; but it is evident that this policy led to a phenomenological, if not substantive assimilation to the bourgeois mode of production.

Ota Šik, leading theorist of the economic reforms in Czechoslovakia, even attempted to discredit the genuine Marxist theory of the disappearance of commodities and money in the period of economic transformation as a dispensable, ideal abstraction, tainted with the odium of Stalinism.⁶ For Marx, however, the production of commodities, generalized socially via the exchange of capital and wage-labour, is from an analytical point of view inseparably linked with the phenomena of alienation and reification—i.e. with the fact that a particular mode of industrial production, though in theory created by men, in fact escapes conscious control by the producers and appears as a natural force. In the concept and in the reality of the commodity's monetary form there is crystallized the spontaneous contingency of a historical process which in theory can be consciously shaped by man.

The economic reformers thus implicitly abandoned essential tenets of the materialist *Critique of Political Economy* in their quest for a forcible reactivation of a stagnating technical progress in Czechoslovakia. Their own ruling interests drove them to throw overboard all practical reflection on the forward movement of the species towards its emancipation, or on the material liberation of production and its direct control

⁵ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Para. 33.

⁶ See Ota Šik, *Plan und Markt im Sozialismus*, Vienna 1967, p. 15 ff.

by the immediate producers. The power struggle involved in the inner-party conflict subsequently pushed the economic reformers to a tactical mobilization of intellectuals and students with their demands for political emancipation. It was predictable enough that this mobilization would in the end gain an independent dynamic of its own, which the reforming State functionaries would no longer be able to control. Moreover, the political liberalism of the intellectuals objectively corresponded to the partial reintroduction of anarchic elements into the bureaucratically administered market.

The most substantial result of political emancipation was the introduction of the liberal institutions of freedom of the press and freedom of opinion (even if this was restricted to a privileged few, and was carried out in a thoroughly authoritarian way). The students, struggling against police suppression or bureaucratic censorship of journalistic publication, and hence of any expression of their immediate needs, insisted upon this as the first imperative. The discussion that developed in the course of the political reforms debouched onto demands of a formally democratic character—plurality of parties in parliamentary representation and civic* freedoms of association—which concentrated liberal consciousness on the State machine, even if on a democratized one. However, the restoration of liberal freedom, (above all the right of association) generated a genuine dialectic; on the one hand these replace the goal of dictatorship of the proletariat by a bourgeois plurality of opinions and factions; but on the other hand they also allow the working class to organize itself freely and to recover the weapon of the strike. Having said this, it is of course true that one corner-stone of the theory of revolution put forward by Marx, Engels and Lenin—the doctrine of the withering away of the State, as the sole means whereby political freedoms can become concrete in a materialist sense—cannot be realized in isolation under conditions of historical co-existence with a heavily armed imperialist world environment. Yet it is nonetheless significant that the reformers volatilized this doctrine into the utopian abstraction of an (at best) regulatory notion of the classical theorists. Apart from the economic minimum of nationalized, but as yet in no way concretely *socialized*, productive forces, the historical and political consciousness of the post-Stalinist reforms was blind to the essential strategic and emancipatory aims of revolutionary socialism. These only survived in an ideologically distorted form. The image of the rational society; the withering away of commodities and of money; ultimately the withering away of the State, and the association in a democracy of *Soviets* of men no longer enclosed within one totalitarian system—these aims were once again bourgeoisified, i.e. reduced in the Kantian sense to merely regulatory notions, which one seeks to approach in a reformist approximation but which one can never wholly realize in the external social world.

It is thus abstractly correct to counterpose theoretically the central emancipatory theses of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat to

*Translator's note: Hans-Jürgen Krahle in fact uses the term *republikanische Freiheiten* throughout this article, referring back to the ideals of the French Revolution and to the struggle in nineteenth century Germany against the petty feudal principalities.

the ideology and policies of the reform movement. But it would nevertheless be concretely wrong to judge the latter directly thereby. To apply, from outside, the criteria of a socialist mode of production or of a political system of soviets to Eastern Europe ahistorically abstracting from the immanent development within them of an étatistic dictatorship over the proletariat, would be a moral postulate rather than a political judgement informed by historical reason. Stalinism for decades eradicated the idea of the revolutionary emancipation and dictatorship of the proletariat from the historical consciousness and political praxis of the European countries and Communist parties led by the USSR. The once-revolutionary policies of the USSR degenerated into *real-politik* and pragmatism, culminating in the conception of peaceful coexistence—that is, the renunciation of any revolutionary overthrow of neo-capitalism as a social form. Within the European 'socialist camp', this process has methodically excluded from consciousness the completely new context within which the historical reality of the world revolution has once again become immediate politics—the social-revolutionary liberation movements of the Third World, fighting at the periphery of neo-capitalist civilization. It has been correctly pointed out that the abstract presence of revolution (as it is made in exemplary fashion in Vietnam, and as it creates a socialist model in Cuba) has not only allowed the student movement in the West to identify the imperialist power-system of the neo-capitalist countries led by the USA, but also to distance itself from the Russian policy of compromise. The consequence of this has been a changed relationship between politics, protest and massacre, producing in the student movement a political ethic of intransigence. It is true that this morality, with its peculiar class origin, still oscillates between the bourgeois-revolutionary derivation of political actions from categorical moral principles and the proletarian-revolutionary constitution of a class morality through the mediation of the political demands of the struggle by its strategic aims. Yet it has been able to offer the first emancipatory alternative to the institutionalized categories of traditional politics in the West, which at best serve to articulate the restoration of capitalism since the Second World War.⁷

But where, as in Czechoslovakia, the social and practical conditions were lacking for a perception of this new possibility offered by a revolutionary world history, there was no alternative historical choice other than an orientation towards the liberal ideals of the bourgeois past. The reduction of the concept of a socialist society to that of a collectivized economy; the autonomy of the authoritarian State machine that was consolidated in the Stalinist period; and the abandonment of proletarian internationalism in favour of the policy of peaceful coexistence—all these combine to explain the general deformation of historical materialism. Under these conditions, the rational need for emancipation could discover no alternative consciousness to the ideology of liberalism. The first phase of liberation from Stalinism was itself both theoretically and practically disfigured by the birthmark of Stalinism. The first steps on the path of emancipation from Stalinism were accomplished above all as a 'summoning up of the dead of world

⁷ Oskar Negt, *und Protest, Politics*

history from their graves' (Marx). The fossilized liberalism of a long-vanished phase of bourgeois society characterized by competitive capitalism was resurrected in an attempt to institutionalize constitutional liberties.

4. Ideology and Practice

The progress which the restoration of civic freedoms under the guise of intellectual privileges has brought with it should be judged objectively, in an immanent critique. If the liberal consciousness of the reform movement was the only objectively possible outward form for its historical will to emancipation from the ruling bureaucracy—then that liberalism should not be assessed as a bourgeois regression, especially since it has also destroyed the conception of a linear path to socialist society from the bureaucratic shell of Stalinist serfdom. The central problem here is that of the inauguration of qualitatively new societal contradictions, which contain a real emancipatory moment.

The recourse to the ideology of liberalism brought about a practical transformation of the constellation of superstructure and base, and thus a historical change in the content of the ideology. The premise for a systematic, critical and historical elucidation of this phenomenon is furnished by Herbert Marcuse's analysis of Soviet Marxism—given that the political constitution of the Soviet Union and its system of economic control are by and large shared by the socialist countries of Europe dependent on the Soviet Union. Marcuse in substance argues that the material basis of a simple nationalization of the apparatus of economic production and a bureaucratically centralized planned economy abolishes the dual ideological character which is proper to the capitalist State, mediated by a class society; but this abolition occurs in a manner that is itself ambiguous. The bourgeois constitutional State, according to Marx, 'compensates' for the generalized rule of a particular class by an ideology of universal and egalitarian legal norms, while at the same time there are factors inherent in this 'appearance of a common interest' which transcend and are even antagonistic to its material base. It is this dual nature of ideology as a true reflection of a false reality and false reflection of a true reality, the former substantiated as domination, the latter projected as a utopian vision, which is levelled off in the State system defined by *Soviet Marxism*.⁸ '... the State becomes, without intermediary factors, the direct political organization of the productive apparatus, the general manager of the nationalized economy, and the hypostatized collective interest. The functional differences between base and superstructure therefore tend to be obliterated: the latter is methodically and systematically assimilated with the base by depriving the superstructure of those functions which are transcendent and antagonistic to the base. This process, which establishes new foundations for social control, alters the very substance of ideology. The tension between idea and reality, between culture and civilization, between intellectual and material culture—a tension which was one of the driving forces behind Western civilization—is not solved but methodically reduced.'⁹

⁸ Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*, p. 120

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

The functionalization and assimilation of superstructure and base in the framework of a hypostatized, bureaucratically planned economy—the Eastern variant of the one-dimensional society—thus removes the utopian, transcendent content from false social consciousness. One of the basic functions of the institutionalized superstructure of bourgeois society is to stabilize bourgeois rule: it achieves this precisely through its ability to integrate the system-transcending content of ideology, and to deflect it into the false track of religious projections, moral principles, and legal fictions. The de-substantialization of ideology in the State systems described in *Soviet Marxism*, however, eliminates the ideologically deformed dimension of emancipation from social consciousness, while at the same time it reveals the inability of those systems to cope with the non-regulated content of ‘ideological transcendence’. At least it does this so long as there persists the fundamental contradiction between a common interest bureaucratically imposed by the State and the still unsatisfied particular interests of individuals: ‘In the Soviet system, the ‘general interest’ is hypostatized in the State—an entity separate from the individual interests. To the extent that the latter are still unfulfilled and repelled by reality, they strive for ideological expression; and their force is the more explosive to the regime the more the new economic basis is propagandized as insuring the total liberation of man under communism. The fight against ideological transcendence thus becomes a life-and-death struggle for the regime. Within the ideological sphere, the centre of gravity shifts from philosophy to literature and art.’¹⁰

What Marcuse calls the ‘danger-zone’ of literary/aesthetic transcendence for the bureaucratized, centrally planned economy was strikingly confirmed by the history of the Prague reform movement and the leading role of intellectuals in it. It was no coincidence that the sphere of literature, even though furthest removed from the base, became the expression of emancipatory, reforming consciousness, for ‘the more the base encroaches upon the ideology, manipulating and coordinating it with the established order, the more the ideological sphere which is remotest from the reality (art, philosophy), precisely because of its remoteness, becomes the last refuge for the opposition to this order.’¹¹ The literary origin of the political reform in Czechoslovakia was concentrated on the aesthetic liberation of Kafka from his socialist-realist exile. This was more than a purely literary affair, it was rather a political programme, as the 1963 Kafka Conference organized by Goldstücker demonstrated. Kafka’s work served as the ciphered text of the liberal intellectuals’ opposition to Stalinism. Irrespective of the theoretical adequacy of this interpretation of Kafka, they read between the lines of his work the experience of juridical alienation, of a bureaucratized legal sphere and machinery of State power bereft of any emancipatory dimension. The advance inaugurated by the reform movement and the intellectuals who were its main bearers—what was historically new within its old external form of liberal consciousness—was its attempt to reconstruct ‘ideological transcendence’ into constitutional guarantees for civic liberties. The latter do not achieve the necessary realization in a material sense of the emancipatory ‘idea’, but they are ideologies in the genuine,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 127. •

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125

that is domination-masking sense, as Engels defines it: "The reflection of economic relations as legal principles is necessarily also a topsy-turvy one: it goes on without the person who is acting being conscious of it; the jurist imagines he is operating with *a priori* propositions, whereas they are really only economic reflexes; so everything is upside down. And it seems to me obvious that this inversion, which, so long as it remains unrecognized, forms what we call *ideological conception*, reacts in its turn upon the economic basis and may, within certain limits, modify it."¹² Engels reduces ideology to the material function of reflection and the formalizing one of reciprocal interaction; he suppresses the transcendent moment of the ideological superstructure. The restructuring and institutionalization of liberal ideology in Czechoslovakia, undoubtedly had a domination-masking and stabilizing character; but it nevertheless also succeeded, by contrast with Stalinism, in reintroducing the tension between idea and reality, base and superstructure, and in thereby opening up a dimension of liberation, even if in a still distorted form. Moreover, on the material basis of nationalized production, ideological transcendence can no longer be integrated constitutionally to the same extent; it is structurally more explosive than in a mode of production organized on class lines. The experience precisely of the first days of the occupation in Czechoslovakia showed that in a country where the State has taken over the means of production, 'republican' liberties can once again provide the proletariat, in a historically quite new way, with the organizational conditions for the pursuit of a revolutionary class struggle *inside the socialist camp itself*. At the same time, it would be an illusion to assume that the structural possibility of a transformation of liberal ideology into socialist consciousness might have been achieved in the short term. The constitutional, parliamentary and nationalist fixations were too well anchored in the consciousness of the masses to be demolished from one day to the next by political struggle.

The possibility of emancipation which was inherent in the post-Stalinist changes in Czechoslovakia would certainly have run counter to the technocratic economic reformism of the ruling functionaries. The political emancipation first introduced for purely tactical reasons by Dubček and Šik could only have been carried through to the end by the masses *against* them, in the class struggle of the Czechoslovak proletariat for the conquest of political power in the State. The Soviet counter-revolution has put a violent end to the still contradictory possibility of carrying on the struggle for revolutionary liberation within the frontiers of the European socialist camp itself—provisionally.

¹² Friedrich Engels, Letter to Conrad Schmidt, October 27th 1890, *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 494.

The Student Action

On Thursday November 21st, at noon, students of Prague and elsewhere left the premises they had been occupying for four days, or in some cases longer. This action was the focus of a nation-wide ferment of resistance to policies of collaboration with the invader. A new phase of the struggle had started. But how did the students' sit-in strike come about? Why was it such a surprise for all observers? And why, despite the inevitable deficiencies, was it so successful? Let us try to find some of the answers.

The whole country had been feeling sick. It was the third month since the invasion, the old popular leaders were still the same, but the confidence people used to have in them, the blind unquestioning confidence in them as individuals, started to wither away. The Moscow agreement on the 'temporary' stationing of foreign troops created the first doubts. Then the freedom of the press was further restricted. The most popular weeklies, *Reporter* and *Politika*, were stopped in November. Travelling abroad was to be made more difficult. In one sphere alone the policy of the pre-invasion period was allowed to continue without hindrance: the revisions of economic structure which the Russians had supposedly intervened to forestall. (The projected Employees' Councils did fail to appear though). And to sum it all up, Gustav Husák, the Slovak party leader, voiced his theory on 'the two periods of deformations in the party'—one before January 1968 and one after that date. In short, the leaders were making one compromise after another, and indeed it was not quite clear what they were forced to do and what was their own initiative.

The plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was scheduled for November 14th, and many people expected that things would be clarified there. It was expected that somebody would be calling a spade a spade—though it remained unclear who that somebody would be. The way in which the session had been postponed from week to week, and eventually from month to month, suggested a great tug-of-war behind the scenes, but details of this only rarely leaked out. Indeed anything was possible, from a wide offensive on the part of the activated and well-organized conservative forces to a consolidation by Dubček and the centrists.

Young people had been continuously warned about the possible consequences of action in the streets. It was said that this could even bring the Russian troops back into the cities. But on October 28th, the 50th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic, crowds of teenagers spontaneously swarmed through the streets without anything happening.

Thus, in the second week of November, the prevailing atmosphere was one of expectation. Resolutions from all over the country were pouring into the Central Committee in support of the post-January political trend—but people had the bitter feeling that not much attention would be paid to them. This feeling certainly did not help to decrease the anxiety. And on the 17th students were to celebrate their International Students Day—the 38th anniversary of Czech Universities being closed down by the Nazis. What would the students do? Would they give in and endeavour merely to 'survive', as so many others in the country had done? We all vividly recalled how it had been, only a year ago, after the Strahov demonstration: everybody agitated at the brutality of the police, all authorities scared of another students' appearance in the streets, and a helicopter circling round the University quarter of Prague. Now, however, things were different.

One thing was quite clear. We did not intend to be complicit with the course of events that had started to prevail in Czechoslovakia. We were determined to show in one way or another our opposition to what we call 'the policy of the lesser evil'—'the policy of concessions'. We were determined to carry on resistance. November 17th was clearly a marvellous opportunity, particularly in view of the Central Committee session which we expected to conclude just about then. We decided to go into action, into an action co-ordinated at least on the Prague level.

The Preparation

The idea actually sprung up from several sides. The radical faction among the Prague students started studying the possibilities of a demonstration as early as the beginning of November. Soon after, we heard from colleagues from Nitra in Central Slovakia, about their plan for a long-term strike in support of 15 points of theirs. These points corresponded to what we had wanted on the day of invasion—immediate convocation of the fourteenth party congress, the opening of discussion on the total withdrawal of troops, a ban on all illegal activity by the foreign forces, the removal of the neo-Stalinist bureaucrats, etc. Roughly at the same time preparations for a march through the cities, to commemorate the victims of 1939 and 'all victims in the struggle for freedom of thought,' were going on in several towns of Bohemia and Moravia, particularly in Liberec and Brno.

There was another important factor underlying the action. The national students' leadership, the Presidium of the Union of University Students in Bohemia and Moravia, had recently changed and become considerably more radical. It was in its political resolution of November 11th that the 'Ten Points' first appeared (see appendix: the 10 points give a

good idea of the political level reached at this stage). Though the resolution did not go so far as to declare lack of confidence in Dubček's and Černík's leadership—though this was by now quite frequently expressed—the ten points proved to be widely acceptable and were taken as a basis for further action.

On November 12th, only a week after the radicals in Prague had started to discuss the possibilities of a demonstration, the whole issue of the forthcoming 'November events' expanded to become of all-Prague interest. On that day, representatives of practically every faculty in Prague gathered to form the Action Committee of Prague Students, which was to organize and co-ordinate everything. This body met daily in the next ten days. The Action Committee and its eight-member-strong leadership enjoyed a confidence among students which was unprecedented by any former students' body.

The leaders of the country were well informed about all the preparations, and were fairly nervous. All that had been decided so far was action; what type it would be still depended on events in the next days. Official warning after official warning was being issued that no disturbances in the streets would be tolerated, and necessary precautions were taken as well; three battalions of soldiers were apparently transferred to Prague, and we heard that Prague had never before experienced such a concentration of State power. All of a sudden the leaders even found time to talk to us. On the 13th we were received at Prague Castle by the top four—Svoboda, Černík, Dubček, Smrkovský, by Evžen Erban, Chairman of the National Front, and by Josef Pelnář, Minister of the Interior. Dubček spoke about the 'complicated situation', about what he expected from the Central Committee which was to meet the next morning, about the necessity 'to control and purposefully guide the movement of the society' and about many other things; he repeated again and again that we would not help him by demonstrations in the streets, that our proposed action was not thought through well enough, nor prepared sufficiently. Černík did his best, however bad it was, to persuade us that the line of the party was best, and the only one possible. The meeting was altogether rather miserable. We didn't promise anything, maintaining that we should act according to the situation. A day later, things started swinging.

Action

We declared a state of emergency in all faculties, as the Central Committee session opened. No end of teach-ins started taking place, a round-the-clock telephone service operated, and the flow of information from our own sources inside the Central Committee started to circulate. We abandoned the idea of the march on the 17th, but said, however, that 'the Action Committee does not exclude the possibility of a political demonstration as a response to the results of the Central Committee session'. In fact it was at this time that preparations for the general student occupation started.

All this was completely new to us. These November events were the first mass political involvement of students in Czechoslovakia for at least

20 years. There had, of course, been the above-mentioned Strahov demonstration, and there had been various sharp resolutions and memoranda; but all this was negligible in scope compared with what was now starting to take shape.

When the national students' leadership reviewed the news from various towns, the result was clear. Things were on the move everywhere, and the smaller towns were waiting for an initiative from Prague to launch the general occupation movement. Students at the University of Olomouc in Moravia actually started off as early as Friday the 15th; they were joined on the following day by students of the Agricultural College in Prague, and on the 17th by colleagues at the Prague faculties of Law, Philosophy and Electrical Engineering. The situation in Olomouc was followed particularly closely: apart from the 'normal' concentration of Czechoslovak forces, some 12 thousand Russian troops are stationed in this town. But, despite the tense atmosphere, there were no incidents.

During all this time, students were on their toes both making arrangements for the sit-in strike and following closely what was going on 'at the top'. Immediately after the Central Committee ended its session, on November 17th, meetings were held at all the big faculties at which Central Committee members delivered speeches about what was going on. It was clear they couldn't say all they wanted, even if they did in fact want to, and several of them were booed out. The Central Committee session ended as it turned out in a middle-of-the-road way; some consoling formulations were added to the final resolution as verbal compensation for the continuance in office of those we did not trust. But that is another story. The results certainly did not make us change our minds about political developments in the country. On the contrary, many people said that only after hearing what had been going on at the Central Committee did they really feel the necessity to act.

During Sunday November 17th, the idea of an occupation was still taboo. Relevant sentences were cut out of a radio speech delivered by Michael Dymáček President of the Students' Union that day, and a television interview with two other student leaders who spoke only about 'several days occupation of our premises, with an interruption of courses' never appeared. On Monday 18th, when the sit-in strike started nation-wide, many people were caught by surprise. Including the leaders of the State.

There was a good deal of tension among the student leaders as well. On the one hand we had obeyed the plea of our politicians not to go onto the streets; but on the other hand we wondered whether we would not let events escape us. Nobody, however, would be left in the lurch. In the past days, thousands of students and staff had signed the 'Solidarity Agreement' which read:

'Should a single student, professor or employee of a University in the Czech lands or in Slovakia be subjected to persecution for his views, his ethnic origin, or his public or scientific work, all the undersigned will consider this an attack against the entire academic community and

will express their disagreement in such a way as effectively to aid the struggle to restore justice.'

This declaration was not only valid for the period of the strike. The sit-in was declared for three days. Only gradually did we realize all the problems connected with it—if only from the purely technical point of view. But spontaneous popular initiative managed to solve most problems almost at the instant they occurred. The Faculty of Journalism immediately set up a Press Centre. The three medical faculties sent out their students to every occupied building. The Film Academy of Arts made a complete cine-documentation of what was going on. One of the technical faculties was systematically eaves-dropping on the police radios. Endless discussions, meetings, cultural programmes were taking place—it was considered essential that the students have something to do all the time. The students' movement in the West was a prominent topic of many seminars (or anti-seminars—as at the Philosophical Faculty). And things were, of course, tremendously facilitated by the overwhelming support of the mass of the population.

Relations with Workers

If the problems of contacts with workers is one common to student leftist movements everywhere, it has an extra special connotation in Czechoslovakia. The gulf between the two strata was here even wider than usual, because it had been artificially encouraged by the neo-Stalinist bureaucracy. Even though something had been done in the course of the Long Spring to bridge this gulf, we never really succeeded in establishing a permanent working system of contacts; they were always rather of an *ad hoc* and campaign nature. Thus it was all the more important for us that representatives from several factories, and particularly members of the newly founded Union of Working Youth, took part even in the preparatory meetings of the Action Committee. We were able to check our own ideas and discover how acceptable they were to the mass of the population.

The Ten Points were widely accepted, and the public particularly admired the discipline of the students. Thus monetary support alone for the strike funds reached tens of thousands of crowns. A co-operative farm sent in seven thousand eggs. It was sufficient to mention the Action Committee and long distance calls were immediately through, the telephonists wishing us the best of luck.

It was only after witnessing the tremendous response to it that we realized how wide an impact the occupation movement actually had. It was only then that we realized the absolute necessity of spreading our views by all possible channels. And so one of the most important documents of the action appeared—the 'Letter to Comrades, Workers and Peasants'. It explained what we wanted, why we were not satisfied with what was going on and how we were conducting our sit-ins. Let me quote a few lines of it:

'We cannot accept the fact that in words we are sovereign and independent yet in reality continuous pressure is being exerted on us from outside—for example on who is to occupy this or that important function

and who isn't; whether the fourteenth party congress should be held now or later; whether this or that paper should be published or should be banned; whether the press should write openly or not. . . .

'In no case can we agree with the fact that lip-service is paid to the necessity of a policy open to the scrutiny of the people, while in reality information about the activity and problems of our leaders and leading bodies is less and less available, and that even the highest representatives of our party and country, who enjoy the sincere and full support of our people, are afraid to speak openly about their problems and worries. The question is, who are they afraid of? . . .

'We appeal to the leaders of our party and our country: don't try to persuade us that the press gave space to antisocialist forces, when we all know how things really were. Don't advocate the things you do, and which are contrary to the path of January, by arguments which are forced upon you. Our working people is bold, wise and diligent. It does not panic, does not give up, desires peace and friendship with all nations, it desires justice, democratic socialism, socialism with a human face, it detests violence and injustice, humiliation, oppression, it loves truth and fair play. Reflect truly these qualities of our people, for you are a part of it. . . '

The letter spread like lightning throughout the country. It was telexed from factory to factory. Students went to factories and factory-workers came to the occupied faculties. Discussions never ended; nor did the influx of resolutions supporting the Ten Points. Many of them spoke in language like this, from an aeroplane construction plant in Prague:

'The workers of this factory declare that they will use all the possibilities they have to help the students with their just demands, should any attempt be made to silence their voice. This includes even the ultimate argument of the working class—a strike.'

Secondary schools in many places were on strike as well. They were also the scene of discussions with university students. No wonder the authorities were alarmed.

The Struggle

On the second day of the strike, student leaders were unexpectedly invited to Professor Colotka, Czechoslovak vice-premier. Kadlec, Minister of Education, was also present. In an 'open and frank' discussion, as it would be described in diplomatic jargon, we were told that the Ten Points were in principle—with slight modifications—quite acceptable, and that the Government actually wanted nothing different. We said that we preferred deeds to words, and point-blank refused to end the action on that Tuesday 'as a gesture of good will'.

How surprised we were later in the day when the Presidium of the Government issued a statement which by and large spoke very unfavourable about the action. This statement was shortly followed by a ban on news items concerning 'all present strikes'. The atmosphere

which developed thereafter in Prague was one of tremendous anxiety. We felt we had been framed and cheated, realizing at this point that the sit-in strike was transformed: having started off as a moral gesture, more or less, with the side goal of learning the technique of occupation, it had now become a political issue of the utmost importance. Never before had we realized how great an influence we could have; we had thought, irrationally perhaps, that if we merely stayed three days in school nothing much could really happen. But things were now much more grave than we had ever anticipated. Factories had announced symbolic strikes for five to thirty minutes, some decided to blow their sirens at a certain time—and with one thing and another, the situation was growing more and more complex. It was during this critical situation that we found out how inadequately the action had been prepared theoretically; nobody had ever thought of such a course of events. And some of the most radical faculties of Prague, such as Philosophy, Nuclear Physics, Law and Agriculture, decided to prolong the occupation for an extra day, whatever might happen. The ban was lifted.

The meeting of the Action Committee that night was exceptionally long—it lasted about eight hours. The discussion needless to say, was very hot. Many a time the French experience was invoked. At the end of the meeting we decided to go on for the fourth day as well—as a response to the Government.

The third day was a critical one. Things looked different in the morning and many had changed their minds. Many found out that they were already too tired. And when some dirty tricks were played with the statement issued the evening before, in which the decision to carry on with the strike for an extra day was explained, many started regretting this step. However, only hours were left now until the end; and on Wednesday, the Government issued another statement saying that it would deal with the 'demands of the democratic students' movement'.

Results

On Thursday morning, the fourth day of the strike, students assembled for the concluding meetings. At many faculties, comrades from factories were present as guests of honour. We felt that something very important had finished. But what were the actual results?

As mentioned earlier, the strike was intended much more as a test of our own possibilities than as a proper challenge to the authorities. From this point of view it was indeed successful. We realized how well we could organize ourselves, we realized the problems which arise, as well as our weaknesses. The students' organization, only a few months old, constituted itself as a political force which cannot be neglected quite so easily. The political consciousness of students seems to have deepened, though we would not like to make rash conclusions about this too soon.

During the strike students acted as a mouthpiece for the masses, demonstrating their disapproval of the deterioration of the political situation. The voice of students is being listened to with much greater

attention than ever before. Our problem now is to have meaningful things to say when we again have the chance. The November action was a significant beginning: now we must consider a more developed programme and more audacious initiatives, uniting our efforts closely to those of the workers and the other intellectuals.

Prague, December 1968

Chronology of November Events

12th—Action Committee of Prague Students founded.

13th—Student representatives received by official authorities at Prague Castle.

14th—Plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party opens. State of emergency declared at all faculties.

15th—The University in Olomouc starts sit-in strike.

16th—The Agricultural College in Prague starts strike. Late at night Central Committee session ends.

17th—International Students' Day. Mass meetings at all main faculties in Prague are dissatisfied with reports delivered by members of Central Committee.

18th—Student strike and occupation all over Bohemia and Moravia. Letter to workers and farmers written and distributed.

19th—Student leaders received by Government officials. Unfavourable statement put out by Government. Decision to prolong strike until Thursday.

20th—Further pressure from Government and Party authorities. Great nervousness among students.

21st—Action ends at noon.

The Ten Points:

1. The basis of our policy is and shall be the Action Programme of the Communist Party as accepted at the April Central Committee session.

2. There shall be no policy behind closed doors; in particular, the flow of information between citizens and their leadership shall be restored.

3. Introducing censorship in the mass media of communication is temporary and shall not last longer than six months.

4. Freedom of assembly and association shall not be violated.

5. The freedom of scientific research, literary and cultural expression shall be guaranteed.

6. Personal and legal security of citizens shall be guaranteed.

7. Those people who have lost the confidence of the nation and who have never clarified their positions shall no longer stay in their posts.

8. The forming of Councils of Employees (Czech name for Workers' Councils) as bodies of self-government shall continue.

9. Freedom to travel abroad shall be guaranteed.

10. In the sphere of foreign policy, Czechoslovakia shall not participate in actions which would contradict the feelings of the Czechoslovak people the United Nations Charter and the General Declaration of Human Rights,

Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation

Manifesto

1. RSSF commits itself to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and imperialism and its replacement by workers' power, and bases itself on the recognition that the only social class in industrial countries capable of making the revolution is the working class.

2. RSSF opposes all forms of discrimination and will lend its support to any group engaged in progressive struggle against such discrimination.

3. RSSF commits itself on principle to all anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist and anti-fascist struggles and resolutely opposes all forms of capitalist domination and class collaboration.

4. RSSF will lend its support to any group of workers or tenants in struggles against the wage freeze and price and rent increases.

5. RSSF's aims cannot be achieved through parliamentary means and it therefore constitutes itself as an extra-parliamentary opposition.

6. RSSF extends to all left students and organizations the invitation to co-operate with it in supporting and organizing for its aims, and extends fraternal greetings to organizations abroad already doing so.

7. RSSF recognizes that the trend of modern capitalism to the increasing integration of manual and mental labour, of intellectual and productive work, makes the intellectual element increasingly crucial to the development of the economy and society, and that this productive force comes into sharpening conflict with the institutional nature of capitalism. The growing revolutionary movement of students in all advanced capitalist countries is a product of this. To organize this vital sector as a revolutionary ally of the proletariat and as an integral part of the building of a new revolutionary movement, RSSF resolutely opposes ruling-class control of education and determines to struggle for an education system involving comprehensive higher education, and the abolition of the binary system, public schools and grammar schools. The transformation of this sector requires the generation of a revolutionary socialist culture.

8. RSSF believes that existing political parties and trade unions cannot either structurally or politically sustain revolutionary socialist programmes. It affirms that it is neither meaningful nor valuable to attempt to capture these organizations. While retaining support for

their defensive struggles, it believes that new, participatory mass-based organizations are required to overthrow capitalism.

9. RSSF believes that students will play a part in the building of such organizations and in the linking of struggles of existing militant groups. It sees its particular role as developing socialist consciousness among youth.

10. RSSF believes that the institutions of higher education are a comparatively weak link in British capitalism, and that the ruling class's field of action can be severely restricted by correctly waged struggles for student control and for universities of revolutionary criticism.

11. RSSF will build red bases in our colleges and universities by fighting for the following Action Programme:

—All power to the general assembly of students, staff and workers—one man one vote on the campus.

—Abolition of all exams and grading.

—Full democracy in access to higher education.

—An end to bourgeois ideology—masquerading as education—in courses and lectures.

—Abolition of all inequality between institutions of higher education—against hierarchy and privilege.

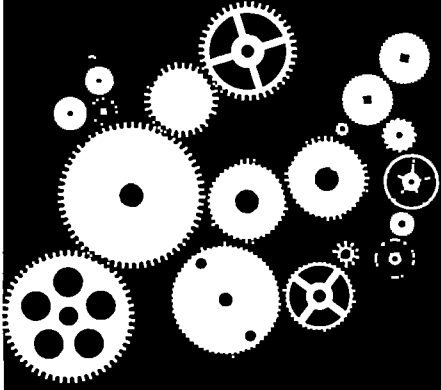
—Break the authority of student union bureaucracies and institute mass democracy.

Adopted by the Second RSSF Conference—London November 10th 1968.

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Two Tactics

THE FOUR FIGURES: 'First place must be given to man in handling the relationship between man and weapons; to political work in handling the relationship between political and other work; to ideological work in relation to routine tasks of political work; and in ideological work to the living ideas in a person's mind, as distinguished from ideas in books. That is to say first place to man, first place to political work, first place to ideological work, first place to living ideas,' *Running the School for Training Successors to the Revolutionary Cause of the Proletariat*, Peking Review 47, November 22nd 1968.

It should not be thought that the call to make the creation of Red Bases a strategic goal of our struggle is merely a flight of rhetoric. The time has come to take seriously the images we use, to explore the limits of the analogies we invoke to the boundary of the possible. We must learn to penetrate the disguises in which history advances. Red Bases first appeared in China disguised as Soviets—perhaps Soviets will re-emerge in Europe disguised as Red Bases.

The reason why both Soviets and Red Bases could be pivots of revolution in Russia and China is that they were simultaneously embryos of a new social

order and means of destroying the old. All revolutions need to discover strategic pivots of this sort—instruments of popular power that dispute the monopoly of legitimate violence claimed by every established order. Because the pivotal institution of such dual power represents a *new and superior organising principle* for social relations (as did both the Soviets and the liberated guerrilla zones) it will be able to combine effectively a challenge to this monopoly on the plane of *legitimacy* as well as on the plane of *force*. The strength of the revolutionary challenge to the legitimacy of the ruling power will depend directly on the extent to which the pivotal institution concretely embodies the immediate aspirations of the masses. Initially the revolutionary movement will no doubt find itself greatly inferior to the established order on the plane of force—it will have to compensate for this by adopting a form of struggle which tends to extend its active social base to all oppressed and exploited groups, and which tends at the same time to undermine the material force formally at the disposal of the enemy.

These apparently truistic formulas reveal the gulf that separates many of the inherited strategies of the European Left from those which have historically produced revolutions. Traditionally the over-riding goal of many Left strategies has been to 'raise consciousness'—without any serious thought about the types of popular institution which might *incarnate and secure* this new consciousness. Its plethora of publications, programmes, proposals for structural reform, intermediary objectives, propagandist participation in elections, 'roads' to socialism, leaflet campaigns, meetings, demonstrations and pickets are all justified in terms of their projected effect on popular consciousness. However necessary all these forms of political work may be in the context of a general revolutionary strategy, they will become ineffective if they are not combined with the discovery of appropriate pivotal institutions of popular power. Capitalist power cannot just be drowned in a rising tide of consciousness. It must be smashed and broken up by the hard blows of popular force. This means that no serious revolutionary can afford to neglect the search for appropriate instruments of this force. Lenin defined a revolutionary situation as one in which the masses do not want to go on in the old way and the ruling class is unable to go on in the old way. In a foreseeable future international capitalism will find itself in such a position in not a few areas. The question will then be: are the revolutionaries willing and able to give up 'going on in the old way'?

Almost without exception the old types of political activity neither affect the daily life of the masses nor encroach on the power of the ruling class. It should go without saying that the organizations that workers create to defend their economic interests can never be adequate to this task of decolonising of everyday life. The critiques of 'economism' and 'trade unionism' by Lenin and Gramsci have never been rebutted. Strikes, even general strikes, tend to induce passivity in the working class: after all, in itself, a general strike is simply workers doing nothing on a large scale. Moreover the masses invariably find that they are more dependant on the day to day workings of the economy than is the capitalist class: the capitalist is

thinking in terms of annual profit rates not of tomorrow's dinner. This is probably why general strikes have not so far played a decisive part either in producing revolution or averting counter-revolution. Usually they last not more than nine days and they can even be a salutary tonic for an ailing capitalist class leading to demoralized workers and higher profits. To say this is not to deny that an 'active' general strike involving mass occupations as *part of* an overall revolutionary offensive would have very different results.¹ A genuinely revolutionary strategy encourages the masses to an aggressive over-participation in the social system, not to passive abstention (e.g. a public examination of exams in the examination chamber itself rather than an exam boycott). For these reasons a mass rent strike, which necessarily involves 'occupation', could have more revolutionary implications than a conventional production strike, however 'unofficial'. Similarly our demonstrations should not take place at week-ends through deserted streets, nor should their goal be merely a symbolic 'rehearsal' of our strength. So far as possible it should be a *use* of that strength meaningfully to disturb the routines of daily activity that actually help to constitute bourgeois power. This point is further explored below. For the moment it should be noted that to be really meaningful an action should take up and develop discrepancies in the articulation of social practice into the social formation—whose dominated structure is determined in the last instance by the capitalist economy. Precise delimitation of existing or potential discrepancies arising on the cultural and political as well as economic levels of social practice is important here.

It should not surprise us that the experience of the anti-imperialist struggle is rich in correctives for the degeneration of local political practice. The revolutions that have emerged from it (notably the Chinese, Cuban and Vietnamese revolutions) grew out of methods of struggle that progressively involved the overwhelming majority of the oppressed and exploited, making the masses the agents of their own emancipation. Guerrilla strategy is the generalised form of this mass revolutionary practice. It contrasts on four levels with many of the traditional anti-capitalist strategies of the European Left. It is premised on a different 1. sociology of power 2. conception of revolutionary practice 3. theory of consciousness 4. estimate of the role of mass activity. A brief comparison at this point will highlight the possible parallels which may exist between those strategies which have proved

¹ See Perry Anderson's discussion of these questions in *The Incompatibles* edited by Robin Blackburn and Alexander Cockburn. Already 60 years ago Lenin was writing: '... the December action in Moscow vividly demonstrated that the general strike, as an independent and predominant form of struggle, is out of date ...' *Selected Writings* Vol. 1, p. 577. Lenin's essays written in 1906 entitled 'Lessons of the Moscow Uprising' and 'Guerrilla Warfare' provide excellent criteria for the evaluation of different methods of struggle: '... Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the mass struggle in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises becomes more acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism therefore positively does not reject any form of struggle. Under no circumstances does Marxism confine itself to the forms of struggle possible and in existence at the given moment only, recognising as it does that new forms of struggle, unknown to the participants of the given period, inevitably arise as the situation develops.' *Collected Works* Vol. 11, p. 213.

themselves in the anti-imperialist struggle and those towards which the new revolutionary forces of the West are moving.

1. SOCIOLOGY OF POWER

The traditional assumption of strategy on the revolutionary Left in Europe is that nothing can be changed until everything is changed. European revolutionaries have sometimes been so preoccupied with the necessary struggle against reformist illusions ('islands of socialism') that they have implied that the revolution will suddenly emerge one day fully armed, like Minerva, from the head of the proletariat. Capitalist power is seen as what Louis Althusser has called an 'expressive totality': that is to say the power of the ruling class is thought to be evenly and equally distributed in all the institutions that comprise the social order. Each part 'expresses' the meaning of the whole with equivalent efficacy: the power of the ruling class cannot be encroached upon until the social order as a whole has been destroyed. By portraying the revolution as a Last Trump that will transform social relations once and for all the traditional idealist conception of revolutionary strategy can easily succeed in daunting the revolutionary movement at the size of the task before it. This leads to an indefinite postponement of the decision actually to start looking for ways to *make* the revolution rather than wait for its immaculate conception in the womb of capitalism's general crisis.²

On an international scale the Russian revolution and Lenin's theory of the 'weakest link' showed the falsity of these conceptions. The appearance of Red Bases in the protracted guerrilla war of the Chinese revolution further shows their falsity within the context of one nation struggle. Thus in a sense 'agrarian reform' in the rural Red Base *preceded* and *assisted* the triumph of the revolution on a national scale just as the work of transforming education in a university Red Base *precede* and *assist* the full consummation of the revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. The guerrilla's liberated zone is initially located in those areas which are *geographically* inaccessible to the repressive forces of the established order. We must ask ourselves whether the complex structures of late capitalism do not contain areas, *sociologically* inaccessible to the repressive forces of the ruling class, which can become growing points of revolutionary power? The black ghettos in North America already promise to become areas of this sort. The student movement, the rent struggle and the Ulster Civ Rights movement have similar possibilities on their strategic horizon.

2. CONCEPTION ON REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE

A guerrilla army does not only proclaim a revolutionary programme, also enacts it. It asks the masses not just to think differently but also to act differently. Its revolutionary practice begins from the everyday resistance of the masses to their oppression. At no phase of its operation does it limit itself to making appeals to the dominant power to behave in a different fashion. Any demands that it makes it can back up

² On idealist errors underlying this theory see J-P. Dollé 'Du gauchisme à l'humanisme socialiste' *Les Temps Modernes* May 1967.

by the popular force it is in the process of unleashing. Its mode of action is almost the mirror obverse of the strategy which hinges on 'intermediary' objectives or programmes. An intermediary objective is classically distinguished from a maximum programme by the fact that it is sufficiently modest to be directly intelligible to the unawakened consciousness of the masses, but at the same time as appearing immediately realizable to the masses, such an objective is actually designed to be *unacceptable* to the capitalist system. When it becomes evident to the masses that the system cannot meet justified demands (a minimum wage level or housing programme) then their conception of the capitalist order will be changed, their consciousness 'raised'. A liberated zone strategy is quite different. The Red Base concretely incarnates one aspect of the *maximum* programme of the revolution—popular power. It can actually create the conditions in which the masses begin to achieve material advances in their conditions of daily existence—significant agrarian reform even if not outright expropriation of the rural landlords and moneylenders. The 'objectives' incarnated by the Red Bases are 'acceptable' to the ruling power, in the sense that it can be *forced* to 'accept' them. The strategy of the intermediary objective launches fake demands in order to expose the system—if it cannot back up these objectives, it risks exposing *itself* as demagogic in the eyes of the masses. The Red Base offers real advances and does not hide from the masses the fact that *only their own efforts*, only their own ability to mobilize effectively against the ruling power, can defend the gains which the Red Base promises. For all these reasons the Red Base is an intermediary *institution of popular power*, not an intermediary objective. While the latter have a valid place in revolutionary strategy, the former concretely make possible the masses' self-emancipation from oppression and exploitation. It is an idealist deformation of revolutionary practice to ignore these questions, now that the emergence of the Black Power and Student Power movements has demonstrated the vulnerability of the capitalist order. The novel brands of revolutionary defeatism are thoroughly defeatist but not at all revolutionary in the emergent crisis of late capitalism.

The strategy of intermediary objectives as theorized by, for example, some sections of the Italian Communist Party is superficially similar to Trotsky's theory of the transitional programme. However, only revisionist interpretations of the latter ignore the question of popular institutions and dual power. In fact the Red Base strategy incorporates as an essential element the posing of transitional demands; but it is ready to take direct action to implement them itself when they are seen to be rejected.

3. THEORY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

From the above it will already be evident that the guerrilla theory does not envisage popular consciousness as a homogeneous entity to be patiently raised by the Sisyphean labours of the workers' movement. Old-style revisionism believed that capitalism would somehow gradually grow over into socialism. New-style reformism believes that the existing bourgeois character of popular consciousness can gradually grow over into a socialist consciousness. The great

guerrilla commanders have all known that the rural masses simultaneously respect and loathe their oppressors. All but the poorest, unemployed peasants are grateful to their landlord, moneylender or employer for allowing them to make a living at the same time as they hate the fact that they are dependent on this representative of the ruling order³. The guerrilla force cures this schizophrenic affliction of popular consciousness by arming the revolutionary Hyde against the timid Jekyll. The new-style reformist imagines that by flattering the bourgeois consciousness of the masses, reducing all his propaganda to economic demands (higher wages, lower rents, etc.) he will magically inflate the falsely-conscious 'bourgeois' worker-mouse into a truly proletarian revolutionary lion. The new militants of the coming revolution in the advanced West are not frightened of shocking, indeed thoroughly *provoking*, the existing reactionary and cowardly aspects of popular consciousness, because they have confidence in the masses: they know the ultimate strength of popular rejection of the degrading system of wage slavery and commodity fetishism. They can only have such confidence because they do not regard themselves as standing above the masses. They do not see themselves as the only true custodian of a social truth which they must dole out in portions sufficiently small not to render the masses heady or intoxicated with their own possibilities. This brings us to the last contrast under consideration here.

4. ESTIMATE OF THE VALUE OF MASS ACTIVITY

It should be obvious that the self-emancipation of the oppressed rural masses is the dynamic social content of the protracted people's war strategy. It might be thought that many Western revolutionaries acknowledge that the revolution will be consummated by the self-activity of the masses rather than merely by the resolutions, manifestoes, programmes, and directives of Headquarters. But for the guerrilla strategists the process of learning from the masses accompanies every stage of the development of the revolution, *including the initial stages*. In all repressive societies the masses will discover their own discrete and individual forms of resistance to the established system. The pseudo-left only recognizes those forms of resistance which have the blessing of the ruling order (orderly demonstrations, trade unionism etc). It is not prepared to consider the testimony of other popular acts of resistance (industrial sabotage, absenteeism, fiddles, delinquency, shop-lifting, 'madness,' etc). For the philistines these are 'symptoms' of capitalist decadence not tributes to the healthy instincts of the masses. Of course on a purely individual plane such activities get nowhere, but the bien-pensant band-aid revolutionaries are no happier when such resistance erupts on a mass scale (black loot-ins, students on the barricades, factory mass occupations, etc.). For them a Black uprising is just an understandable excess committed by the oppressed Black people: they do not see that it has many very positive aspects (e.g. it constitutes a strain on the stretched resources of the repressive power, it involves a direct re-appropriation of surplus value etc ⁴).

³ See Hamza Alavi: 'Peasants and Revolution in Asia', *Socialist Register* 1965.

⁴ Points made by Martin Nicolaus at the Socialist Scholars' Conference, New York 1967.

Let us compare this whole way of looking at the resistance activities of the masses with the wholly different approach exemplified most brilliantly by Mao's *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*.

'IT'S TERRIBLE' OR 'IT'S FINE'

The peasants' revolt disturbed the gentry's sweet dreams. When the news from the countryside reached the cities, it caused immediate uproar among the gentry. . . . Even quite revolutionary-minded people became down-hearted as they pictured the events in the countryside in their mind's eye; and they were unable to deny the word 'terrible'. Even quite progressive people said, 'Though terrible, it is inevitable in a revolution.' In short, nobody could altogether deny the word 'terrible'. But, as already mentioned, the fact is that the great peasant masses have risen to fulfil their historic mission and that the forces of rural democracy have risen to overthrow the forces of rural feudalism. . . . This is a marvellous feat never before achieved, not just in forty, but in thousands of years. It's fine. It is not 'terrible' at all. It is anything but 'terrible'. 'It's terrible!' is obviously a theory for combating the rise of the peasants in the interests of the landlords; it is obviously a theory of the landlord class for preserving the old order of feudalism and obstructing the establishment of the new order of democracy, it is obviously a counter-revolutionary theory. No revolutionary comrade should echo this nonsense. If your revolutionary viewpoint is firmly established and if you have been to the villages and looked around, you will undoubtedly feel thrilled as never before. Countless thousands of the enslaved—the peasants—are striking down the enemies who battered on their flesh. What the peasants are doing is absolutely right; what they are doing is fine! 'It's fine!' is the theory of the peasants and of all other revolutionaries. . . .

THE QUESTION OF 'GOING TOO FAR'

Then there is another section of people who say, 'Yes, peasant associations are necessary, but they are going rather too far.' This is the opinion of the middle-of-the-roads. But what is the actual situation? True, the peasants are in a sense 'unruly' in the countryside. Supreme in authority, the peasant association allows the landlord no say and sweeps away his prestige. This amounts to striking the landlord down to the dust and keeping him there. The peasants threaten, 'We will put you in the other register!' They fine the local tyrants and evil gentry, they demand contributions from them, and they smash their sedan-chairs. People swarm into the houses of local tyrants and evil gentry who are against the peasant association, slaughter their pigs and consume their grain. They even loll for a minute or two on the ivory-inlaid beds belonging to the young ladies in the households of the local tyrants and evil gentry. . . . Doing whatever they like and turning everything upside down, they have created a kind of terror in the countryside. This is what some people call 'going too far', or 'exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong', or 'really too much'. Such talk may seem plausible, but in fact it is wrong. First, the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. For ages they have used their power to tyrannize over the peasants and trample them underfoot; that is why the peasants have reacted so strongly. . . . Secondly, a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. . . . The rural areas need a mighty revolutionary upsurge, for it alone can rouse the people in their millions to become a powerful force. All the actions mentioned here which have been labelled as 'going too far' flow from the power of the peasants, which has been called forth by the mighty revolutionary upsurge in the countryside. . . .

All those whom the gentry had despised, those whom they had trodden into now audaciously lifted up their heads. They have not only lifted up their heads but taken power into their hands. They are now running the township peasant associations (at the lowest level), which they have turned into something fierce and formidable. They have raised their rough, work-soiled hands and laid them on the gentry. They tether the evil gentry with ropes and crown them with tall paper-hats and parade them through the villages. . . . Not a day passes but they drum some harsh, pitiless words of denunciation into these gentry's ears. They are issuing orders and are running everything. Those who used to rank lowest now rank above everybody else; and so this is called 'turning things upside down'.³

Mao's assessment of the value of 'going too far', and of the concrete experience of turning the world 'upside-down' vividly underlines a vital ingredient of his conception of revolutionary practice—a preparedness to trust the masses, learn from their spontaneous resistance to the established order and to take up and generalize the most effective forms of collective resistance. Moreover, Mao's analysis aimed to produce not just a 'correct understanding' of the peasant movement but also a political practice that would lead to the creation of a zone of popular power (the Red bases) with its own popular force (the Red Army).

To talk of force today in many 'revolutionary' circles is like mentioning rope in the house of the hanged man. Yet who can seriously question the fact that if a popular revolutionary movement is to develop in the West it will have to discover the forms of force that are appropriate and adequate to its situation? These will be the mediation and correlation on the plane of force of the superior organizing principle of social relations of which the revolutionary movement is the carrier—just as the guerrilla army is fundamentally different from the top-down, non-participatory, bureaucratized hierarchy of the imperialist army. In its present over-developed state, capitalism spawns a host of control mechanisms and cooling-out systems (education, welfare, the mass media, etc.) which precariously serve to pacify the masses as well as to realize surplus value. In all of these a revolutionary practice is discoverable. Initially this practice may involve a relatively high ratio of cultural contestation to material force: every great revolution has been preceded by a cultural movement. Indeed the collective will of a significant section of the masses present in any of the institutional enclaves of bourgeois power may itself be a sufficient 'material' force to begin the construction of a Red Base. Furthermore an incipient revolutionary movement will not court repression unless this is clearly unavoidable or liable to be exemplary. Moreover it should always be prepared to withdraw from

³ Mao Tse Tung *Selected Works* Vol. I, pp. 26–30. When Mao first advanced the idea of 'independent Red areas' he stated, no doubt partly for reasons of diplomacy *vis-à-vis* the Comintern, that they could only be set up in the conditions peculiar to the China of that time; a footnote to the 1965 Peking edition of the *Selected Works* (Vol. I p. 71) informs us that Mao has now modified his views on this question. It would be most rewarding to search for the correlates in our own situation to Mao's concepts of 'tangled warfare', 'mobile warfare', 'protracted war', 'people's war', etc. For example does the continued strength of the nation state within the international economic system of advanced capitalism create a situation homologous to that of China's warlord period and its 'tangled' conflicts?

one area in order to be able to enter another. A guerrilla liberated zone is not a static territorial entity—as Debray has argued it may need to be a moving *fovo*. For example the Chinese Communist Party met bloody suppression in the cities in 1926–7: in the subsequent re-orientation of strategy many proletarian militants ruralized themselves to participate in the peasants' struggles. The time might come when some sections of the European student movement should 'industrialize' themselves or try to find methods of organizing the resistance of the proletariat, petit bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletariat⁶. But when all is said and done, the time has already come when the revolutionary movement will have to consider the question of force. It will have to ensure that the instruments of popular power which it forges are armed with more than just good ideas.

Already the movement is throwing up new methods of struggle. The urgent task now is to make a reality of Lenin's injunction that revolutionary Marxism '... generalizes, organizes, gives conscious expression to those forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. . . In this respect Marxism *learns*, if we may so express it, from mass practice . . .'⁷. At the present stage of development it must be emphasized that there are many forms of struggle that go beyond propagandist activities without yet reaching the level of full-scale armed conflict. Neo-Menshevism encourages us to limit ourselves to 'principled' slogans by implying that the only alternative to this is organizing a full-scale uprising. In fact the middle range of actions has great potential for undermining capitalist power and arousing the masses. It includes mass occupations (of their universities by students, of vacant buildings by the homeless, etc) demonstrations which are instrumental as well as expressive, denying facilities to the ruling power for a given time (e.g. airports, radio and tv stations, Government buildings, computers, newspaper distribution networks, etc). Over-developed capitalism not only produces a jungle of institutions each with a determinate 'relative autonomy' it also depends on the harmonious interlocking of innumerable, intricate acts by every member of the society, each playing out his multiple assortment of allotted roles (the tax-paying, law-abiding routines of social life). The new forms of action explore the vulnerability of this delicate system of oppressions—it is, of course, only truly vulnerable where it can be opposed by mass contestation. At a somewhat more developed level the movement discovers adequate methods of defending itself. The experience to be closely studied here includes that of the French movement during and after May last year (Nantes as well as Nanterre), the 'armed' demonstrations of the Japanese comrades at Okinawa, the 'vigilante' groups of the Derry populace, the emerging militias of the Black Panther movement, the new methods of the Californian struggle (headline in the *Times* recently 'Demonstrators Use Tear Gas Against Police'), the actions of the Basque and Quebec liberation movements, etc. In addition to studying the experience of fully developed guerrillas

⁶ Such a movement could enter not just the factories but also the cultural institutions of the working class. For example, should it follow the example of the early Bolshevik party and send groups of specially trained comrades to work within the religious sects which have a working-class membership and elements of an anti-capitalist ideology?

we should also consider the history of the tin mines occupied by workers in Bolivia for many years, the seven-year occupation of Caracas University, the emergent Naxalbite movement in India, etc. Our tactics should be informed by a close knowledge of the articulations of capitalist power, discovering those situations where it weakens its ideological strength by using its material strength. We should acknowledge that any revolutionary strategy whatsoever will involve setbacks and defeats: we should prefer those actions that give the masses an experience, even if only a temporary one, of self-liberation. It is worth-while reflecting on the impact that the Vietnamese struggle has had on the populations of the imperialist countries, precisely because it is such an example of struggle against the system. We should look for this sort of exemplarity in our own *actions* rather than content ourselves with exposing the system through its own 'objective' workings. The strategic goal of the Red Base only emerges at the end of this whole series of forms of action. The analogy it invokes is useful because it concentrates our attention on the proper criteria for the evaluation of revolutionary practice. It also can help us in trying to create popular institutions which incarnate revolutionary practice as effectively as the existing political parties and trade unions incarnate reformist practice.

The above discussion of revolutionary strategies is not meant to provide arguments against any particular tactic. Indeed the full experience of any great revolution would probably involve the use in one context or another of *every* tactic conceivable (including compromise, negotiation, etc.). What is important is to discover which strategy and set of tactics can play a *really pivotal role* in destroying the old power and expressing the new, popular power. If successful, this discovery would help to give a genuinely revolutionary sense to the other aspects of the activity of the revolutionary movement. Finally the reader may note that I have not been specific about the precise nature of the initiatives implied by this argument. The time has certainly come for us to be as specific as possible about the new forms of revolutionary practice which are now possible and necessary. This task, however, goes far beyond the limits of a short essay aimed at clarification of the theoretical premise of the Red Base analogy.

The Impermanent Stronghold

The Red Base is usually discussed in an ahistorical way, and like anything else, when subjected to such treatment, it doesn't make much sense. In a brief outline, I hoped to place it firmly on the ground of historical process, and to point out at least one of the potential advances.

The leftist political movement among students had its roots in relatively inauspicious days when students were involved in the campaigns of the Labour Party, on a large scale in 1964 and on a much smaller scale in the jaundiced years between 1965-66. Doubtless we could suggest other basic reasons in the development of the movement to that point, the relative sexual liberation of young people, the decline of the CND and hostility to its methods, but I think there is little doubt that the existence prior to 1964 of Conservative Governments was a key factor in mystifying the potential of the Labour Party, and many people fell prey to it. The two and a half years from 1966 show a parallel development of the leftist student movement along three tracks. In the first place there was a feeling that active participation (take over) of the student organizations was the order of the day, and effort shifted to local student unions and to the NUS. Talk was of 'student trade-unionism'; it took a short time for many advanced cadres to recognize that such a notion was absurd outside the orbit of mass action and participation. We had made the first moves: these institutions were obviously designed to lead nowhere. At the same time, the first radical broad based movements were forming, and although the RSA has somewhat given way to the RSSF, the change is rather more profound than it is apt to look. That is illustrated by the third parallel change.

When the first student sit-ins took place two years ago, it was not clear that the effects of the action would stretch very much further than the walls of the College or University. The fact that they did was illustrated in action, and the realization has remained with us ever since. It is again a profound change, from fighting for something 'better' or 'more democratic' 'in' the College, to see that one is dealing with a corporate social institution. RSA is a child of the first era, and the fact that it hasn't ever fully escaped into the second, whose political lessons are so much more crucial, is illustrated by its persistence in playing NUS political games. RSSF is bedded on the ground rock of the realization of the social complicity of the University, its wide manipulative functions and its hierarchical purposes.

At each stage in the development sketched, from institutional participation to anti-institutional action, from a relatively constitutional movement to highly radical movement, from internal, bourgeois action to widely committing radical social action, new and more vigorous demands have been made. Those formulated in the RSSF manifesto will not be the last, for there are no ultimate demands, but they do represent an acknowledgement of the previous history of the movement and they do move in the direction shown by its dynamic. The major innovation in those demands is the imperative to form red bases. Were one to imagine that this requires militants to abandon all other work to establish them tomorrow, the scepticism mentioned would be justified. Clearly, the RSSF prognosis has learnt the past and its lessons and sees red bases as the outcome of actions at a moment in the (near) future when the politicising ground work has been achieved and the concrete issue in which everyone of a radical disposition and analysis will have a crucial stake has been made plain.

Nor will the red base be an end in itself except in the limited sense of the student role as distinct from any other role. The seizing and holding of the red bases is clearly the last act the students can undertake as students, for once they have engaged in that course, they are a fair way down the road to abolishing the intellectual—manual worker distinction, as they will have liberated the University from selectivity. If the old role will have dismissed itself, it at the same time heralds the new possibility of progress which exists when the red base comes into existence, for it could undoubtedly engender its own dialectic.

In the first place, the red base is both inward and outward looking. It is the former since it becomes a secure zone within a hostile society for the length of time it can be held. It allows an area to be consecrated in the name of revolution in which the formulation of an entire alternative ideology, carried on the back of essential demands, can be instigated. The cordon sanitaire becomes traversible for everyone who wants to cross it, whatever their background, student or worker. This was surely the reason why the Sorbonne was focal and symbolic. It is outward looking since the entire function of its inner self is to offer the most and profound radical critique of what surrounds it. In the first place it will be a critique—but not one which will have to propose its own solutions. If its critique, shown as much by the example of praxis as by its intellectual fury, is adequate, then it shouldn't stand alone for too long. Already in this country, workers have been discussing the reawakened memory of the factory sit-ins, occupations of the 'thirties. When the young workers come in, or we are allowed into the areas they occupy, we shall have reached the point of construction, for it is certainly not for bourgeois intellectuals to formulate the institutions of the new society.

It is essential that the step is taken whereby some social institution becomes perverted from its designed intention. Where better than the university, designed to produce the governors of the workers, yet capable of producing ideas which sustains their overthrow of the bosses?

In the second place, the inward function is itself dialectical. It is both its greatest practical weakness and its greatest theoretical strength. Debray (NLR 33, p.32) quotes a young Caracas sociologist, whose formulation of the theoretical level which may be attained by the red base, is seminal: 'If we lower the tone or level of discussion we may establish closer links with the masses, but it will become necessary to dim the flame, our theoretical and practical preparedness will decline, and perhaps we will become reformist and lose sight of the final objective. If, on the other hand, the pure flame is sustained, doubtless we will lose contact initially and for the immediate future. . . .' This sociologist was especially concerned with the problem of losing contact with first year students, but let us take the meaning to be wider. The theoretical intensity to be attained by turning inward, and the practical awareness which a red base could ensure, might initially estrange us from many potentially sympathetic elements of the working class who must finally be the leaders of the struggle. The University as a red base (or as a *fora*) can be more easily isolated as the unhealthy canker, in that, to quote Debray's, 'this precinct reserved for liberty, can also prove a trap: the abscess is fixed where everybody expects it and is insulated from the "healthy" social body.' It 'simmers in isolation'.

The resolution of the contradiction is not beyond reach. Paris showed the possibility of preserving the level and intensity of debate, a task shared by workers and students alike after the first few days, by creating first one and then many secured zones. What started in the Sorbonne proliferated through Paris theatres and factories, each with the potential of being a red base, and some succeeding in the aim. At the same time the streets themselves became a theatre, but that they did so, and thus prevented isolation was because the Sorbonne stood occupied as a red base. Indeed the discussions taking place in the red base were the same discussions taking place on the streets even when no words were being used; 'Revolution is a continuation of talks when these have become impossible' (Part of Thesis 10—The Thirty Theses of May).

Thus the first contradiction of the inside and the outside is resolved by the workers joining and then leading the student effort. The second contradiction is resolved, on the contrary, by the students inside taking their discussion and ideology outside, among the workers. The precondition for anything valid to take out is the discussion and praxis, the example and the courage of what is going on within the red base.

Seen as an essential step in fulfilling the tasks of revolutionary students, the duties of Marxists becomes clear. They are:

1. Create red bases.
2. Make it clear to the workers why we are doing so.
3. Hold them for as long as possible in order to reap their full benefit: practical awareness, militant hardness, theoretical insight, fighting courage, and sufficient humility to relinquish any vanguard role to the workers.



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Strategy and Struggle

LENINISM: Lenin's achievement within Marxism was to found the autonomy of a revolutionary political practice which defines in each case the social content of the revolution that can be made, the corresponding revolutionary class alliance (the 'people') that the Party must cement at the political level, and the counter-revolutionary bloc (the 'enemy') whose political organizations, above all the State, must be smashed in order to carry through the revolutionary social transformation.

The task of the Marxist cadre in mobilizing the various popular classes and groups and uniting them towards the revolution is summed up by Lenin in the concluding section of 'Two Tactics' (Coll. Wks. 9, p. 112): 'Social Democracy . . . demands that this word ('people') shall not be used to cover up failure to understand class antagonisms within the people. It insists categorically on the need for complete class independence for the party of the proletariat. However, it does not divide the 'people' into 'classes' so that the advanced class will become locked up within itself, will confine itself within narrow limits . . . it does that so that the advanced class, which does not suffer from the half-heartedness, vacillation, and indecision of the intermediate classes, should fight with all the greater energy and enthusiasm for the cause of the whole people, at the head of the whole people. That is what the present-day new-Iskristis so often fail to understand, people who substitute for active political slogans in the democratic revolution a mere pedantic repetition of the word 'class', declined in all cases and genders.'

THE STUDENTS

The starting-point of a strategy for the student movement must be the question whether 'students' (in contemporary Britain) form part of the 'people' or of the 'enemy'. The transience of the situation that defines 'students' makes it necessary to examine both their origin and destination in the relations of production, as well as their specifically structured position within the college or university. Some fundamental structural facts are listed below.

1. Class background is a relatively unimportant determinant of student political potential except for the small minority of really bourgeois, students whose future position is secured outside of their educational achievement, and the smaller minority of working-class students who received anti-bourgeois values from their parents and maintained these through primary and secondary education. The mass of students are economically and culturally independent of their parents—a situation very often sealed by conscious rejection.
2. The large majority of students are destined for skilled positions in the productive labour force, and only a minority will obtain positions as direct agents of capitalist authority or in a direct servicing role to the capitalist class.
3. The stratification of the higher education system generates a considerable differentiation of social destination, with universities filling a higher proportion of 'elite' positions.
4. The competitive exam system is a form of existential oppression that students all undergo. It forces the acceptance of set curricula, generates the pedagogic role of the teacher, atomizes students and tends to force them into a relation of mutual antagonism.
5. Students experience very sharply the sexual repression generated by the nuclear family. Exclusively young, and with the ideas of psycho-analysis highly accessible, students tend to create a culture of partial sexual liberation which is however opposed by the requirements of their future role in the relations of production.
6. The great majority of students are motivated to compete in the exam system by the promise of the bourgeois life-style that will accompany a relatively privileged position in the labour-force or a managerial/executive position.
7. The position of a section of the students, especially in social science departments, approximates to that of an intelligentsia without organic ties to the ruling class. Given the accessibility of Marxism, they are able in the classic pattern to become conscious of the contradictions of capitalist society before the proletariat, the class that is in fact the non-dominant aspect of this contradiction.

These factors provide a complex series of differentiations within the student body in relation to the potential of revolutionary mobilization. Some sections of students are serving a fairly unambiguous apprenticeship to a career of direct service to the capitalist class (e.g. law, accountancy, industrial relations); others have quite ill-defined career prospects (e.g. sociology). Some sections have greater chances of an elite position (universities); others will almost certainly become highly skilled workers (colleges of technology). Some students are at the centre of production of bourgeois ideology (social science departments in the larger universities), and are thus the potential exponents of revolutionary theory. Future teachers will have a vital role in maintaining bourgeois hegemony, but are in a position in their job situation itself to subvert bourgeois socialization and turn it into its opposite. In their great majority students are part of the people, but the enemy is sociologically present. Most important, the boundary is fluid, both due to the exam system and the cultural component of class identification; before they have been integrated into the bourgeois culture associated with a relatively privileged

position in the labour-force, the objectively popular sections of students—who form the great majority—can be won for the revolution.

STUDENT MOVEMENT

Student consciousness in Britain as elsewhere has had both a trade-unionist aspect (from academic reform to student power) and a political one. The political aspect has so far been unambiguously the dominant. Purely trade-unionist demands have rarely been the occasion of fierce struggle—this has usually arisen as the consequence of exposure of the political connections of the university (germ warfare, spies on campus, racialism, Vietnam, etc.) This is undoubtedly because of the confinement of the student movement so far largely to the higher echelons of the binary system and even to the social science departments there. Even with struggles more trade-unionist in appearance and outside of the universities, Hornsey, the prime example, took place in an 'elite' Art College and had strong political/cultural undertones re the role of art in society. The student movement has not yet mobilized the far more oppressed mass of students in the science and technology departments, in the technical universities, polytechnics, teacher training colleges, colleges of education more oppressed both by the exam system (crushing work loads), sexually (highly monogamous), and with far less prospect of a more privileged work position, even though the advance signals of their mobilization are now being reported.

This uneven development has brought with it a certain advantage. Spontaneously, almost effortlessly, the student movement has created itself as a national political presence (the equation: 'student = revolutionary' in the mass media and popular consciousness). This achievement is hesitatingly consolidated in the RSSF, which has immense potential now if it can overcome growing pains and generate higher degree of organizational seriousness. It can play a vanguard role for the student movement, and if a revolutionary student strategy can be pursued, then its agents can only be the cadres organized around the RSSF.

FIELD OF OPERATION

The struggle inside the educational system must first be weighed against political work outside, i.e. working-class agitation and servicing. The reasons are overwhelming why it is necessary to concentrate our efforts within the educational institutions for the next year or more:

—experience shows that at present even prolonged and systematic industrial work by students (in whatever organization) produces negligible results, while efforts within the educational institutions produce by dry criteria great gains here and now.

—at present the number of student cadres prepared to engage in industrial work is very limited, but by our efforts inside the colleges we should be able to produce within two years many times the present number of cadres who will undertake whatever work is strategically most important.

—the anti-imperialist movement that has been a major expression of student politicization provides a vitally necessary element in revolutionary ideology within the imperialist metropolises, which would at present be endangered by making direct working-class agitation the main-field of our political work.

—the one section of the working class where students can hope to build a revolutionary base in the immediate future is apprentices and young workers who are brought together within educational institutions by the Day Release system.

RED BASE

The Red Base is the most important weapon that the student movement can produce for the socialist revolution, and makes the link with the working class at the revolutionary political level. The Red Base does not mean that the late capitalist university can be a militarily liberated area prior to a general revolutionary crisis. It means that:

1. bourgeois liberalism can be replaced by Marxism as the dominant ideology among the student mass;

2. real power can be won via mass mobilization over courses and exams, over college buildings and facilities, and this can be used materially to strengthen the forces of revolution.

The concrete results of the Red Base strategy will be:

1. production in each large college every year of a significant number of students who develop into revolutionary cadres;

2. production in each large college of a red mass of several hundreds or even thousands of students who reject bourgeois ideology and culture, and can be mobilized at any time for struggle inside or outside the education sector;

3. premises and facilities of colleges which can be taken over when required for revolutionary activity of any kind;

4. colleges which can be centres for ideological and research servicing of the working-class movement, helping it develop along the path of revolution;

5. most important the fact that the university or college with a red strategic majority can function as a revolutionary political presence or *foo*, concretely expressing the ideas of socialist revolution to which the working class must be won.

Within the educational institution as elsewhere, the struggle has two aspects: the struggle with force (mass mobilization → occupation → resistance → armed struggle) and the struggle with ideas. The strategy of the Red Base is premised on the fact that in any institution essential to the forces of production forms of dual power can be created here and now. A politically mobilized mass of students can force major concessions from the authorities, and if these concessions are the only way of keeping higher education in production, they will be granted. True, one university could be closed down if this would keep the rot from spreading, and no doubt several colleges will be forcibly closed from time to time, but the higher education system as a whole can no more be closed than can a basic industry. The other alternative is of course physical repression, already carried out in many countries' universities (and factories). But, given that the revolutionaries are

serious, this only intensifies the struggle without resolving it; moreover it exacerbates the tendency for the struggle to spill over from the students to the working class, while destroying the liberal façade of the bourgeois state that is its most plausible justification in late capitalism.

REVOLUTIONARY CULTURE

It is important to provide a Marxist alternative to bourgeois ideology at all levels—critique in the classroom, commentary on current affairs, and general routine ideological work. But the struggle for a red student mass cannot be won by ideological debate alone. As long as students are motivated to accept the competitive exam system by the promise of a privileged work position, by the colour-supplement life-style held out to them by the bourgeois press, there is a material barrier to their acceptance of revolutionary ideas. Only by freeing themselves from the dual oppression of the competitive exam and the bourgeois life-style can student revolutionary potential be truly released. Revolutionaries must therefore learn to communicate with the mass of students at a deeper psychic level—finding ways to show them the bankruptcy and vacuity of the bourgeois career, the bourgeois home, the bourgeois family, helping them liberate their repressed sexuality and aggression, helping them discover the alternative life-style that is involved in being 1. revolutionary fighter 2. a comrade 3. sexually emancipated (of none of which most hardened socialists are always models).

MASS LINE

If the student mass, isolating the true bourgeois and the dyed-in-the-wool careerists, is part of the *people*, potentially anti-capitalist and therefore to be brought under Marxist hegemony, then the work of Marxist cadres within the student sector must follow the mass line, and socialist-sectarianism is as counter-revolutionary as it is among the working class. The idea that we must convert before we can struggle, a mass of reds before a red mass, must be decisively rejected. Conversion itself requires involving students in struggle. 'Confrontation' by itself does not produce a revolutionary consciousness, but the experience of struggle is necessary all along: —to test in practice and break down bourgeois mystifications (e.g. 'academic freedom', impartial arbitration, representative democracy), and provide an ideological space that Marxism can fill; —to test different groups (professoriat, junior staff, union bureaucrats, different sections of students)—who are our friends and who are our enemies? —to test individuals by putting them in situations where they can make an existential commitment to revolution; —to test and develop the strategy and tactics of struggle in the educational institutions in order to carry it each time to a higher level.

We must enable students to struggle at the level at which they are confident that our ideas will win and that, once existing structures are put in question, mass democracy *will be* red democracy. This does not mean opportunism, it does mean that the difference between the

consciousness of the Marxist cadres and that of the mass of students is recognized and that we put forward programmes that students can and will struggle for now—and this means programmes for mobilization and not for purely propagandist ‘demands’ of the traditional type.

DARE WE WIN?

We must avoid the trap of seeing our goal as the realization of a static ‘student programme’. In the colleges and universities our goal is the power that comes from mass mobilization and mass struggle, the power that is mass democracy in form and red democracy in content. But in the fight for ‘all power to the general assembly’ we must not shy away from the specific role of the Marxist cadres on the pretence that ‘it is the class not the party that rules’. Within the mass mobilization and the mass democracy, the Marxist cadres must prepare to play a leading role, winning the mass for their proposals and taking the initiative in carrying them out (e.g. as an open committee responsible and recallable to the general assembly). In the face of threats to close a college, we must show that we are prepared to run it—as a Commune—and that we don’t fear our own strength. Because to control our institutions, deploy their resources, act in their name, and by our actions win the confidence of the mass of students and confirm them in the path of revolution—these must be our objectives.

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A Revolutionary Student Movement

What are the objectives of the student movement? This principal question of strategy can now be posed.

Until this year the English debate on the student movement was concerned with two problems: whether students can be revolutionaries, and whether struggle in the universities can be revolutionary struggle. It is now widely accepted that the answer to both these questions is yes. Yes, students in student struggle can be revolutionaries; yes, the universities are strategic and vulnerable elements of late bourgeois society.

These questions of strategy and their answers remain incomplete. *Practice* has established that students can strike against the hierarchy of authority and the prestige of knowledge—the twin pillars of academic power; that students in a student milieu can engage in many-sided revolutionary struggle; that a strategic majority of students can be won to revolution. For the most part without prospect of entering the ruling class, without capital, suspended in time between the terrors of examinations, students can strike out *en masse* against bourgeois order, especially that represented by their own authorities.

It is not inevitable that students will act in a revolutionary way, but the possibility has been clearly shown. The student movement must become the realization of this possibility.

THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

In the universities the question of power is being posed. Revolutionary students must have the determination to resolve it—to help all students free themselves from the hegemony of the authorities by establishing red bases which will detach the student body from the institution's controls, set up dual power on the campus, and create the permanent possibility of revolutionary action at the highest level. Red bases must be built on democratic centres in the faculties, departments, halls of residence, flats, societies, clubs, study groups, newspapers and magazines, and on the physical liberation of student existence from external controls. In bourgeois society red bases could be Latin Quarters with an internal life that is open and militant, and a majority ready to switch the offensive overnight. To achieve this free area of action means acquiring space where the cultural and material pre-conditions of

revolution can be accumulated. Creating such pre-conditions does not just mean 'raising the consciousness' of the mass of students—it is also necessary to anchor that heightened consciousness in real encroachments on bourgeois power.

Any democratic mass challenge in higher education challenges oppression in the society as a whole. However the repressive power of capitalism is not everywhere the same. If the right methods of struggle are found, and if revolutionary action is firmly based on the aspirations of the masses, capitalist power can be thrown back in particular limited contexts. All such territory gained will only be held precariously, and can be lost or 'contained' unless the general force of the revolutionary movement develops. The peasants of Vietnam are breaking one particular link of the chain of international capitalist power, even though their liberation will not be complete until imperialism as a whole is destroyed.

For the student movement there are two pitfalls to be avoided: the reformist interpretation of the demand for student power that imagines that socialism can be built on one campus, and the defeatist notion that nothing can be changed until everything is changed and that the work of revolutionaries is therefore solely to make propaganda for revolution—never actually to start making the revolution in the situation where they find themselves.

Many students, though eager to strike out against capitalism, are reluctant to consolidate their freedom and build revolutionary centres for the future. Stunted and deprived by their homes and schools, they still retain the familiar compromise of radical anti-authoritarianism and adolescent dependency, both of which serve to excuse them from work, from the effort of creating independent situations of their own. To consolidate red bases demands such effort; in particular two co-ordinates of capitalist society, its legality and its ideology, must be thrown back and replaced by counter-legality and revolutionary culture.

When students take over buildings, they refuse the bourgeois game of rules and regulations; they place judgement, and therefore legality, in the hands of the general meeting. Similarly, red bases do not aim at reform, or at constitutional take-over of a university or college: on the contrary, they ~~use~~ the position of the institutions in society to create their own counter-centres—counter-centres based on mass democratic self-organization, which is in turn sustained by groups in all the different areas of student life, not by individuals running a bureaucratic machine. The widespread detestation of bureaucracy, which is one of the most positive aspects of the present situation, will cut the ground from under its own feet if it evolves, as it sometimes does, into a nihilistic attack on organization as such, instead of developing alternative forms of decision-making.

Revolutionary theory and culture also demand sustained effort, including considerable individual intellectual labour as well as the creation of study and discussion groups, the setting up of newspapers

and magazines. The oppressive force of bourgeois ideology has to be criticized concretely; its division of knowledge, its serialization of people, and its fetishization of commodities must be understood and rejected in practice. And there is no pre-constituted revolutionary theory which provides all the answers. To achieve uninhibited knowledge students must interrogate everything, draw on all the schools of Marxism and on advanced bourgeois knowledge, and utilize every means of communication available.

The internal life of a red base must be vigorous enough to sustain the contradiction between it and the rest of society. With determined militants playing a leading role in the work involved, neither isolating themselves nor losing contact with each other within the mass of students, students as a whole will succeed in creating mass democratic counter-organization, and revolutionary theory and culture on the campus.

Turning the universities into red bases now means:—*First and foremost the mass of students liberated from the clutches of the authorities*; from the controls of the administration, from the hegemony of bourgeois ideology from the safety catch of their Unions, from the mystique of the institution, from the strait-jacket of institutionalization and from the sugar-coated bullets of participation.

—Second, *the militant students won over to the revolution*: creating on the campus a theory and culture capable of understanding the university and its position in society; linking different struggles, combating the bourgeois reification of their own lives, politically surviving their transition out of the university or college; finally and most important, posing the question of political power everywhere and at all times. Which means—

—Third, *the vanguard organically linking itself with the mass of students*, learning from them continuously: arguing its case in discussion and debate; seizing back the leadership that social-democrats exercise over the students through their control of unions, newspapers, debates; abolishing the chains that students cling to, and liberating them from fear by situating and expressing their hopes and grievances.

Red bases for the future overthrow of the ruling class and the immediate liberation of the students—that is the goal of the student movement.

THE NATURE OF THE ENEMY

'Every revolutionary movement is organized as a function of two principal criteria:

1. The nature of the enemy
 2. The goal of the movement (the kind of revolution it aims to achieve)
- The nature of the enemy defines the form of repression that a revolutionary movement must be able to outwit.¹

¹ André Glucksmann: *Strategy and Revolution*, NLR 52, p. 109.

On June 15th and 16th 1968, at the same time that the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation held its founding conference at the LSE, more than forty vice-chancellors and principals met in secret at Downing College, Cambridge and exclusively discussed the student movement. For the first time in a quarter of a century, a struggle opened in Britain over the political allegiance of an entire social bloc.

A much needed revolutionary organization was born in painful confusion. At that very moment a powerful, well-polished and experienced opposition planned how best to emasculate it.

What is the enemy hoping to do? Essentially to demobilize the students; by absorbing their leadership and sterilizing it with futile labour, by conceding consultations and social reform, by isolating the militants, victimizing and expelling them. They will attempt to out-manoeuvre the students, buy them off, fragment them and then contain them.

What are the vice-chancellors afraid of? Certainly not revolutionary slogans without a mass of students, educational reforms within their institutions, ideological denunciation unbacked by coherent theory. All these will play into the hands of the authorities. What is this enemy afraid of?—a red majority.

The pivotal struggle over student power will be the organization of the student masses.

The vice-chancellors and principals have decided to try the well-oiled English strategy of concession, integration and ruthlessly wielding the big stick against an isolated and fragmented leadership of those articulate enough to oppose them. Their specific strategy in relation to the English student movement is quite clear. First, they are backing the National Union of Students as hard as they can. They will attribute advances in university organization to the nus, they will encourage 'leading' students to participate actively in this massive and leaden organization. They understand its union function perfectly. But the nus is very far from the students, indeed it works very hard to remain so. And this makes its intervention in an actual student struggle very difficult, and its ability to contain an insurgence almost negligible. On one occasion, nus did successfully intervene; at Leicester, Geoffrey Martin nus President, who happened to be a personal friend of both the vice-chancellor and the Union President, skilfully cooled out both sides and dissolved the confrontation into fruitless negotiations. But this mode is too haphazard for the vice-chancellors to rely on. Their first weapon in the struggle to contain the students will be the Union presidents and their councils. In each institution the vice-chancellors and presidents will attempt to paralyse the students through the power of the student unions wielded by their para-police of bureaucratic careerists.

Their National Organization

The authorities continuously co-ordinate their efforts and share their experience, both among themselves and with the State authorities.

When dealing with their own petty kingdoms, vice-chancellors and principals cry 'autonomy' and 'academic freedom'. But when their arbitrary rule is challenged by the members of a university, when they are faced with an effective demand for critical as opposed to institutional autonomy, the administrators of ideology scuttle back to the protection of their class, the minor contradictions of intra-bourgeois power struggles instantly forgotten.

This is what Walter Adams, director of the London School of Economics, wrote in his Report on the events of the weekend October 26th-27th 1968, after his provocative attempt to prevent the School's occupation had been successfully thwarted:

'In addition to calling a special meeting of the standing Committee on October 22, I sought the advice throughout the developing situation of the Chairman of the Court, the pro-director, the five governors elected by the academic board and the dean of Undergraduate Studies. I was acutely conscious that their was inadequate communication or consultation with many other members of the academic staff, particularly after the closure on Friday and the suspension of telephone services. At various times contact was made with the Minister for Higher Education Mrs Shirley Williams, the Chairman of the Universities Grants Committee, the Chairman of the Vice-Chancellors' Committee, the Principal of the University, the School's solicitors, the Assistant Commissioner of Police, and various other persons, in order to obtain or give information.'

The conference at Downing, the discussions between Commonwealth vice-chancellors in Australia over the Summer, the select seminar at Nuffield at the beginning of this academic year, the long negotiations with the NUS have all been used to build up a body of experience. In each single conflict all the vice-chancellors and principals are at risk; during and after confrontations they therefore consult, discuss with and report back to their colleagues. This process is *bidden*, the articulated forces behind a vice-chancellor are not evident to the students, his phone calls go untapped. He, and the university or college administration, will redouble the mystification, emphasizing the irrational, individual aspects of his actions, personalizing power, to mask its structured reality and to allow themselves more room for manoeuvres.²

The vice-chancellors and principals *are* individuals, but their *power* is not merely an individual power. Whatever the local differences between them and other elements of the bourgeois order may be, their national organization informally but effectively enforces its political leadership. The autonomy of vice-chancellor's and principals from the ruling class is only marginally greater than the autonomy of the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique from the US Government. Just as the Thieu-Ky-Huong clique represents the disagreements of the US Army in the field with the US State Department in Washington, so the vice-chancellors with their Senates

² A typical ploy of the authorities during a sit-in is to launch a rumour that the vice-chancellor is under strain, is over-anxious, has a weakness in some vital organ or is finding difficulty breathing. This sort of blackmail is a sure sign that the students are winning.

and administrations only represent the more reactionary and short-sighted arm of *national* educational policy and organization.³ A thorough comprehension of the enemy's national strategy is essential to the defeat of the forces of hierarchy on the campus.

Their Objective

The national political objective of the authorities is: *to preserve the class basis of English education*, through hiding its mechanisms from the effective political criticism of those who are subjugated by it. Firstly by *isolating* students from each other *institutionally*—between the different universities and colleges, between faculties and departments, between colleges and halls, turning the horizons of students inwards towards their geographical location so that the particularity of their existence dominates their real social situation as students. And secondly by *dividing them organizationally*, through unions, sports clubs, the NUS, etc, assisted of course by the media.

Oxbridge with its fetishized college system is the apotheosis of these two processes and a special object of preservation, its entrance exams the vertex of social division and inequality in English education.

The vice-chancellors, principals, Ministry of Education, etc, will above all attempt to prevent the formation of a self-conscious, nationwide, student movement. Because precisely by being both national and democratic such a movement will inevitably confront the educational system as a whole.

Co-ordinated national occupations are still for the future: even now, the solidarity that is essential to prise off the stranglehold of parochialism is patchy.⁴ The isolation of students in the colleges and universities is a real social structure which concretely affects their situation. As a result the *front line* of the *national* struggle in England at the present moment is to be found, always with local differences, in each institution. Whether the students will become a free and active bloc or be passified into an obedient group—that is what is at stake in every struggle. It is not a question of unity, but of self-determination. Their present organizations already unify them into seriality and inertia. The authorities would like to keep things that way.⁵

³ General Van Tien Dung, V.P.A. Chief of Staff, exemplifies the strategic importance of both levels of struggle in: 'After political failure the US Imperialists are facing military defeat in South Vietnam,' Hanoi 1966.

⁴ The Art students are the only sector to have spontaneously acted in any sort of union (summer 1968); the universities showed little solidarity with their fellow students in the colleges, and on the whole ignored their lead.

⁵ In the occupations that have taken place so far, many militants have surrendered their political position to calls for unity, and have colluded with liberal appeals to community consciousness. Almost inevitably this passive attitude towards the mass of students—understandable after the long years of isolation from mass actions—leads to passivism, and worse, to the fetishizing of political allegiance at the expense of actual politics. It encourages socialists to develop a narcissistic concern with their own socialism while failing to politicize *the situation*; at a time when students have to find a way to sustain continual mass opposition to the authorities, these militants retreat to defensive propaganda to ensure their own survival. Liberated areas require decisive popular support for the liberators, but not neces-

THE PRECONDITIONS

The vice-chancellors have launched a nation-wide pacification programme. They are promising, laughably via the NUS, university reform and student participation. Revolutionary students will have to confront this initiative, which for all its apparent feebleness may prove to be adroit and difficult to handle, and combat it with vigorous counter-attacks. It follows that they must develop in practice a general ability to mobilize large or small numbers of students at all levels of action. If this work takes place within an accurate strategic perspective, it can establish the pre-conditions for the positive task of creating red bases and developing the practical theory of their organization.

For the national initiative to pass to the students, the local struggles will need to be situated consciously within the structures of education and should exploit the advantages of decentralisation. The Bristol occupation was an outstanding example of such a correct strategy. Its demand that the university union be opened to all students in the city united the students at their strongest in inter-college and university solidarity, and assaulted the authorities at their weakest, forcing them to call in the State to suppress a manifestly just demand.

Bristol also illustrates that to confront the enemy is a *specific* task which demands understanding the *strategic positions* of the enemy as well as his fire-power and mobility. This is difficult to grasp in a non-military class struggle such as that beginning in Britain at the moment. For the ruling class uses institutions as one of its main agencies of domination. Institutions are both *weapons*, instruments of repression and demobilization, and at the same time they are also *arenas*, strategic sociological space.

The Bristol sit-in, as the joint action of students from more than a dozen colleges in addition to the university, by-passed the student's unions and removed from the university, whose Senate building they were occupying, its internal power of expulsion. The political power of institutions primarily resides in the positions they occupy, the co-ordinates of action that they establish, which have usually forced students to a confrontation on unfavourable ground, and only secondarily in their net power of rejection and expulsion. The strength of the Bristol sit-in was that it refused the co-ordinates, avoided fighting on the vice-chancellor's territory at the same time that it occupied his building, and thus forced him to call in the State.

The first objective then is to change the terms of the game. With that as the perspective, it is possible to start to identify the factors which have so far contained the student movement; and those which have shifted

early a majority of revolutionaries. By polarizing the situation and *successfully posing a choice*, militants can structurally liberate the majority *in action*. The mass of students, still politically mute, are revolutionary with their feet rather than their minds. Amongst themselves revolutionary students must continually speak the revolution, learn its language and theory; amongst the mass of students they must above all *act* the revolution, finding the acts that speak as well as the words that act.

the co-ordinates, and created new relations between the forces on the campus.

Abolish the Unions

The first weapon the vice-chancellors and principals use are the student unions. These, with their pseudo-democratic voting procedures, function directly to contain the students—*the unions are the invisible occupation of the student body by the authorities.*

Sometimes called Guilds, which exactly characterizes their pretense at providing facilities for an apprenticeship subordinated to a master, the unions are a banal yet effective transplant from the Oxbridge tradition into a more utilitarian milieu. They generate between student the tyranny of unwritten prestige that dominates all university life.

In the confrontations at the LSE, at Leicester, at Leeds and at Hull, where there were already established unions, the power of initiative held by the president and the institutional majority represented by the unions played decisive roles in the development of the struggles. Union presidents and their minions exercise powerful control during mobilizations. As the threat of negotiations looms, as chairmen are elected, telephones and offices used, time and again the legal if illegitimate representative of the students will play a crucial role. Time plays into the hands of the authorities, and this has proved to be as true of the union bureaucrats as it is of the university ones. Moreover, outside confrontations and occupations, the union apparatus will again and again play a decisive role on the issues on which confrontation can take place, by compromising the majority of the students with the authorities by colluding with victimisation—as at Sussex over the red paint throwing—and by funnelling the students into the established hierarchy. Abolish the union.

The recent occupation at Birmingham exemplified the contradiction between red and bourgeois democracy, and illustrated the crippling effect of division within the student body. Two crucial days highlighted the relationship between the student Guild and the General Assembly of the sit-in. On Monday December 2nd, a General Assembly of 2,500 students debated whether or not to withdraw without any concessions from the authorities. The full case for occupation was argued: 1,800 voted to stay in, and only 300 voted against. Tuesday saw a Guild meeting: the Guild was officially supporting the sit-in. Wednesday's *Redbrick*, the University newspaper, described a caucus meeting of the Right that took place beforehand.

Several of the science and engineering departments had cancelled lectures to allow students to attend.

Professor Davies, Ian Nelson, Sue Jackson and Dr Mike Hayes had met before the meeting to discuss tactics. They decided that if discussion was curtailed they would win, in contrast to Monday evening's meeting. This in fact happened and the motion (to withdraw, AB) was passed.

A meeting of 4,000, the biggest ever held by students from one institution in England, was manipulated by the Right, including reactionary staff, and treated to the familiar techniques of imprisoning people in their own ignorance. On the most important issue the Guild had ever had to decide, 2,300 voted for unconditional withdrawal after a twenty minute debate with four speakers. The speaker who proposed continuing the occupation was himself subjectively against it: as a member of Guild Executive, however, he paid lip-service to their official line of support for the sit-in. The Guild captured the effective leadership of the occupation through its powers to control the assembly of all the students. Bureaucratically absorbing the challenge of the sit-in, the Guild destroyed the democratic basis of the occupation, and compromised its demands. Subjected to trickery and deprived of principled discussion, the mass of students voted for their own subordination whilst the careerists looked on.

Before such confrontation can succeed, unions must be abolished and their assemblies brought into the hands of the students. Victory is impossible when the students' organization is an ossified remnant of parliamentary balloting. Collective struggle appears to engulf the union; experience shows that, as time passes, it is contained by it.

Set Up Popular Assemblies

To assure victories in confrontation, to test and experiment with socialist democracy, to guarantee future generations of students non-institutionalized self-government, the students' unions must be transformed into popular assemblies with all power in the general meeting. Chairmen elected from the floor meeting by meeting. A sabbatical secretary. Special task committees for particular jobs. No secret or informal negotiations.

Will such an organization work? This is the first question that has been posed by the practical. Have they ever seen the present union bureaucracies at work, permeated with laziness, jealousy, petty squabbles, rank inefficiency, minor corruption and vanity? The amount of mundane organizational work involved in an ordinary union can be swiftly executed with the minimum of money and time where there is will and determination. If students cannot organize their own unions, what hope is there for worker's control? These minor executive functions are peripheral to the present social role of the union, which, we repeat, is to organize and contain the mass of students.

Contestation

Once a base of popular support exists, revolutionary students should not balk at taking popular leadership. It is the problem of achieving that base of support, however, which is at present the key one, and which, for the many institutions which have still to break out of their prehistory, is imperative.

Where there has already been an occupation, future sit-ins are a tactical potential: where there has not, a sit-in is the first strategic objective.

'Contestation is, in itself, constructive, because it creates the pre-conditions for a political life. The multiple centres it provides—action committees, strike committees, faculty committees, student meetings, etc.—are so many political foci: they were not set up as a result of a programme, but by virtue of the need to decide on a programme; they did not result from an agreement between leaders but from the right to hear the 'leaders' and be heard by them. . . .

The Sorbonne became a public place. Since Greece, the public place has been the permanent birth-place of democracy.'⁶

Demands are revolutionary in the *way* they are made. Contestation illuminates and challenges the social relations of power, whatever its demands may be. The issue of 'no secrecy' for example. First clearly formulated by Tom Fawthrop⁷, the demand for no secrecy in Senate or its committees is a basic democratic principle, quite distinct from demands for participation. Participation is an abject co-operation of students in the projects of their overseers. Without a transformation in the basis of power in the university, participation means participating in *their* decisions and *their* decision making. 'No secrecy' bypasses the irrelevant question of bureaucratic representation, and confronts the *relationship* between the administration and the university. By questioning their whole mode of organization, 'no secrecy' reveals the authoritarianism of senate and administration. But the way in which even this clearcut issue is posed is more important than the demand itself. Everybody will 'in principle' concede no secrecy, 'with certain exceptions, etc.' It is posing the issue sharply in practice which clarifies everything. Once this clarification has been achieved, there is no need to press for concessions. It is to play into the hands of the authorities to squander energy and determination in futile combat; once strong enough, students can just as well reverse the demand and insist the Senate promises *never* to publish its boring and futile discussions. The object of contestation is not just the reform of the university or the liberation of facilities for use; it also establishes the independent ability of students to reach a self-conscious autonomy.

CONCLUSIONS

Protracted people's war develops a flexible relationship to territory; liberating local populations where it can, it combines people and terrain to create a geographical immunity that sustains an absolute and imminent threat of revolution. Revolutionary students can also develop a flexible relationship to the occupation of buildings, and by assisting the liberation of students they can create a 'sociological immunity' that allows them, at the same time that they are taking part in bourgeois society, to be ready and capable as in Germany and France or striking against it *en bloc*.

In Britain anything like this is still for the future. For the present Va Tien Dung's analysis of the military field holds good for the field of

⁶ *André Glucksmann*; *Strategy and Revolution*, NLR 52, p. 105.

⁷ Tom Fawthrop: *Hull*, NLR 50, p. 59.

revolution in the West. '... in the military field, position is the decisive factor. It reflects in a definite situation the possibilities and trend of the force in action. It also reflects the outcome of the competition of the subjective efforts of each belligerent in the utilization and deployment of his forces to create a position advantageous for himself and disadvantageous for his opponent. With an advantageous position a small force can change into a powerful force, inferiority into superiority, and weakness into strength.' The next year or so will see the deployment of forces through the vertical sociological space of urbanised British society. Organisationally through its institutions and ideologically through the structured absences of its thought, bourgeois society will take-up its positions and try to build the fire-breaks and impose the constraints that could demobilize students. The authorities in education already occupy positions designed to hide the overall class nature of the struggle: they must be forced to reveal it.

Some students, intuitively grasping their containment, try to resolve it, to spring the trap, by changing their class allegiance. But revolutions depend on an alliance of classes around a strategy, not on a strategy of alliance to a class. For students to play a revolutionary role they must earn their place in such an alliance. A political university—where, for example, facilities are used to open revolutionary courses for workers, young and old, white-collar and manual, secretaries and housewives—offers more to the working class than cadres alone. *Political self-determination is the precondition for effective alliance.* The immediate objective remains; students must achieve 'sociological' freedom, fighting their local battles with a firm grasp of the political war now being waged to subdue students nationally.

English reaction will try to absorb and defuse democratic organisation—it must be thrown back. It will attempt to divide students, in particular through exploiting the demobilizing field of the Unions and Guilds—they must be abolished and replaced by popular assemblies. For the authorities the objective is dual power within the student body and a monopoly of effective control. For the students the objective is dual power on the campus and freedom to use the institutions as they decide. From such a position of advantage, their small force can change into a powerful force, inferiority into superiority and weakness into strength.

January 1 1969

Revolutionary Immortality

Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Cultural Revolution

Robert Jay Lifton

Dr Lifton, the distinguished authority on contemporary psychological patterns in East Asia, sees the goal of the Red Guard movement in China as the rebirth of the nation through the attainment of revolutionary immortality — a sense of participating in permanent revolutionary ferment, and by living on within the ferment, of transcending individual death.

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IN THE FIST OF THE REVOLUTION

Jose Yglesias

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The Economist

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Race and Politics in South Africa

The revolutionary struggle of the black masses in South Africa is at its inception, and the problems of what path it must take—rural or urban guerrilla, a strategy based on the Reserves, on foreign base-camps or on the city ghettos and shanty-towns—are still unsolved. It goes without saying that as socialists our fundamental commitment is to those who are already confronting the repressive apparatus of the South African régime with arms in their hands. But at this early stage of the struggle, the very power of that régime has led to a certain pessimism in some quarters about the possibilities for its revolutionary overthrow. Hopes are consequently placed in some evolutionary erosion of white dominance as South Africa's economy expands, which will in turn lead to a more 'normal' bourgeois democracy—no longer based on race lines—in which a 'normal' class struggle could re-emerge. It is this reformist thesis which is the subject of the article which follows; the aim is to demonstrate that *only*

economic and political functional aspects to become an autonomous entity which in itself circumscribes any movement towards reforms by the dominant white élite. As a consequence of its 'economism' the reformist thesis is unable adequately to inform us about that to which we are most concerned to seek an answer, *viz.* how the blatant contradictions between South Africa's economic and political systems, between the economic base and the (racial) ideological 'superstructure', will be overcome.

An examination of the origins, historical development and consequences of race discrimination and ideology in South Africa will not only reach radically different conclusions to those suggested by the reformist thesis, but will in addition afford the opportunity of highlighting the significance for political analysis of examining a society's specific historical legacies; the fundamental relation between structure and superstructure and the too often neglected effects that the latter has upon the former. South Africa affords a specific and ideal opportunity for such an examination; for race discrimination is not only embedded in her social, political and economic structures, it is also embedded in the consciousness of her peoples.

The Origins of Race Consciousness

From shortly after their arrival at the Cape in 1652 the European Dutch, through superior force of arms, were in a position to dominate the indigenous Hottentot population. As a direct result of this situation, the resultant socialization process, in terms of the allocations of roles and status between the two groups, lay primarily in the hands of the European. However, in this early period of South African history, this 'naming' of roles and status was defined by the European primarily in terms of religious belief rather than skin pigmentation. Non-literate coloured races were seen by the European either as 'little lost souls', to be rescued and converted to Christianity or, alternatively, as 'pagans' who had no soul to lose and were therefore born to slavery. Thus a non-European at the Cape, once baptized into the Christian religion, was immediately accepted as a member of the white (Christian) community. And if baptized as a slave, was entitled to his freedom.

With the importation of a considerable number of slaves from the East, European attitudes with regard to race underwent a significant change. The Europeans came to associate all forms of manual labour with servility, and became increasingly reluctant to undertake this form of work. Thus economic factors gradually began to intrude and undermine the original Christian/Heathen status differentiation. In place of the latter distinction, an economic and social hierarchy based on skin pigmentation was set up because those in the lowest economic and status groups were clearly distinguishable by their skin colour.

By the beginning of the 18th century, European agricultural expansion was taking place at the Cape; there arose the beginnings of a frontier society, and a resultant frontier mentality which was decisively to affect race attitudes in South Africa. Being intensively engaged in the struggle for survival, a frontier society can afford to give

little consideration to other peoples. Under such conditions, self-identity and status, through the use of social distance, must be kept to a maximum. In the meeting of the pastoralist Boer and African tribesman (1770 onwards), and with competition for water and grazing lands, it became imperative from the Boer point of view to dominate the Africans and to accentuate their difference. The Boers' Calvinist religion of predestination conveniently placed the 'heathen' African beyond salvation. By virtue of his religion the frontier farmer thus justified his right both to extend his own lands and to subjugate the 'heathen' by whom he was surrounded. The idea that Christians and non-Christians were in any sense equal was utterly foreign to the frontier mentality. Indeed, the Boer farmers conceived the difference between themselves and the African to be as great as that between themselves and their cattle, with the Africans in fact being named by the Boers as *Zwarts Vee* (Black Cattle). It was upon these foundations that the precursor of present-day Apartheid, the master-servant social fabric of the 19th century Boer Republics, was built up. Thus in the Transvaal Republican constitution it was specifically stated that there should be no equality of race in Church or State. Upon these determinants, the psycho-sociological and historical legacies of (racial) conflict and (racial) fear, Afrikaner Nationalism was later to build its most powerful weapon in its pursuit of the total domination of South African society—racist ideology.

The Historical Development of Race Ideology

The development of the ideology of race in South Africa, based on the historical, political and socio-psychological legacies previously outlined, arose in its overt form as a result of three fundamental and interlocking factors. Firstly, the late-19th century rise of Afrikaner nationalism in opposition to British Imperialism. Secondly, the acceptance by British Imperialism, through the mineowners, of the already existing racial master-servant social fabric. Thirdly, due to 20th-century industrialization, the competition of black and white for urban employment.

Afrikaner nationalism developed out of the Boers' need both to re-establish their identity, and to create a group homogeneity through which they could ultimately rectify and overcome the humiliations and defeats which they had suffered since the events leading up to the Great Trek of 1836—events which culminated in their pacification by the British in the Boer War of 1899–1902. As the Boer leader General Botha remarked, 'the battle which was won and lost in the fields of war must be fought again upon the political platform.' As developed and eventually formulated (in the notorious Draft Constitution of 1941), this drive for power had as its ultimate object the total domination of South Africa in order to protect and promote the interests of Afrikanerdom.

The pivotal point of the Afrikaner-English power struggle in the period 1910–48 centred on the primarily peaceful struggle to obtain power through the white-dominated electorate. As far as the Afrikaner Nationalists were concerned, their main fear during this period

revolutionary action on the part of the black masses can in fact smash Apartheid, and South African capitalism with it.

Socio-Economic Background

The three fundamental factors in the extraordinary speed with which South Africa has developed, in the space of approximately one hundred years, into a highly industrial nation have been: the discovery of diamonds (1867) and gold (1884); the availability of overseas, primarily British, capital; and the 'availability' of cheap African labour which has enabled the mines' working costs to be kept to a minimum.

The growth of national income in the last half century has been outstanding. From a geographical national income, measured at current prices, of £131 million in 1911-12, it had risen to £2,356 million by 1960-61. This is an eighteen-fold increase, inflated by the general rise in prices that occurred during this period. However, even at constant prices, there has been a six-fold increase. During the same period the population increased 2.7 times so that average per capita income has more than doubled, being £139 p.a. in 1960. Furthermore rising income accelerated the rate of domestic saving. Since 1945 the rate of domestic capital formation has increased enormously, from £142 to £546 million by 1961, when it represented 30 per cent of the net national income.¹

Although the average net income of £139 p.a. places South Africa in the middle range, comparative with other nations, this national income is extremely unevenly distributed. The 1950 figure shows the average white family income standing at £1,616 p.a.; Indians and Coloured £308; Africans at £145 (£213 in urban areas; £120 on white farms; £97 in the Reserves).² It can be seen that the national income is distributed largely on a racial basis, with the white, with few exceptions, comprising the upper higher income groups. Consequently in South Africa the normal horizontal lines of class stratification are in addition crossed by a diagonal colour-bar line which places a total barrier on vertical mobility as between white and black, and so forces the country into a closed social system. In relation to the non-white population, the whites form a single status group—a 'pigmented aristocracy'. Birth establishes membership, or non-membership, in the closed order, as in a feudal society. *Thus colour is all-important, and the preservation of its purity of paramount concern.*

This caste-like structure of South African society has a dual and intertwining purpose. It sustains both the white segment's privileged social status and its dominant economic situation. At the strictly economic level the system serves to control and direct the movement, wages and power of non-white, particularly African, labour. The implementation of pass laws and cash (poll and hut) taxes on the African population from the mid- and late-19th century originally served, and still maintains, the vital purpose of 'inducing' the African population off the land, away from their subsistence agricultural economy, into working

¹ Figures are primarily from: D. Houbart Houghton: *The South African Economy*.

² Total population figures (in millions): Africans, 12.7; Whites, 3.6; Coloureds, 1.8; Asians, 0.6.

for (and in the case of the pass laws, preventing their desertion from) the white man's cash economy. Later, in the 20th century, the pass laws were in addition utilized to restrict the influx of Africans into the 'White' areas, and ultimately as part of the whole machinery of the policy of racial segregation and capitalist exploitation.³

The Reformist Thesis

The rapid economic development of South Africa (150 per cent rise in GNP since 1947), in which there has been an historical conjunction between economic deprivation and racial discrimination, has recently given rise to an economic reformist thesis in which it is maintained that South Africa will soon enter an era of high mass consumption which will lead to the 'embourgeoisement' of a considerable section of the non-white population, and at the same time to the granting of political reforms by the privileged minority white ruling group. The reformist argument suggests that, with its rational, impersonal and colour-blind imperatives, the economic base will resolve South Africa's 'race question' by revealing that the latter never 'existed except as a cover for economic cleavages.' That is, 'Economic rationality urges the polity forward beyond its (racial) ideology'.⁴

The weakness of this thesis lies in the fact that it applies Rostow's primarily economic theory of the stages of growth to predict not only the future economic, but also the future social and political development of South Africa. In its acceptance of Rostow's 'convergence' theory of all industrial societies, the reformist argument fails to recognize that in the process of industrialization countries have developed not one, but three broad political forms: communism, fascism and liberal democracy.⁵ The reformist thesis, with its high level of abstraction, fails to examine the specific and concrete social conditions and historical circumstances under which industrialization has taken place in South Africa. With its emphasis on the economic base, the argument ignores the vital interplay between subject and object in the historical process and the resultant superstructures (cultural, political and ideological) which emerge to form well-nigh autonomous entities—entities which themselves act back upon and effect the economic base, and indeed man himself and his definitions of his situation and his ends.

The ultimate failure of the reformist thesis lies in its simplistic and deterministic theoretical foundations which are quite unable to handle the complex historical process whereby race discrimination, prejudice and ideology in South Africa has, at one level, cut loose from its original

³ Despite legislative efforts to restrict the movement of Africans into 'white' areas, over two-thirds of the African population now live in these areas, with approximately one third in the 'white' urban areas. So-called 'white' areas total 87 per cent of the available land space. The pass laws, it should be added, have been one of the perennial sources of expressed African grievances. *Convictions* under these laws have averaged over 300,000 per year in the period 1952-62. cf. *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa*, 1963, pp. 137 *et seq.*

⁴ cf. R. Horwitz: *The Political Economy of South Africa*, 1967, p. 427. For the full thesis, cf. M. C. O'Dowd: *The Stages of Economic Growth and the Future of South Africa*. Also, Norman Macrae: 'The Green Bay Tree', *The Economist*, June 29th, 1968.

⁵ cf. Barrington Moore Jr.: *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 1969.

lay in the possibility of a political alliance between their English-speaking opponents and the non-whites; and more particularly they feared that the English, in seeking to further this alliance, might extend the non-white vote. If this had occurred, the likelihood of Afrikanerdom ever achieving power through constitutional means was minimal. Although once or twice rather vague political overtures were made to the non-whites by Afrikaner nationalists, it can be said that their predominant tactic here centred on the elimination of the non-white from the electoral system, and hence from any 'legitimate' say in South Africa's political affairs.

In so far as the second area of attack, the white voter, was concerned Afrikaner nationalism's task was made easier by three factors. Firstly the Afrikaners outnumbered their English counterparts, and their birthrate was higher. Secondly, electoral delimitations and weighting have always favoured the rural, predominantly Afrikaner-speaking areas. Thirdly, as a consequence of the growth of the mining industries and the resultant industrialization and urbanization of South Africa, large numbers of African and white workers were brought together in a common urban environment—with, however, mutually competitive interests. Thus the question of race (consciousness) rather than class (consciousness) was seen by most of the white segment to be the most fundamental factor in terms of their own survival.

Furthermore the Afrikaner people as a whole were much more aware than their English-speaking opponents of the significance of the race question for the future development of South Africa. Given both the historical legacy of their psycho-sociological background, and the fact that they were a predominantly rural people, the Afrikaners experienced and appreciated much more fully the harsh impact of industrialization and urbanization. They recognized more clearly the latter's consequences for Afrikaner culture, and indeed for the entire relationship between white and non-white, than did the urban-based English. The latter, secure in their exploitation of the non-white and in their overall economic domination, could afford to view the two 'racial' questions (i.e. English/Afrikaner and Black/White) in a far more lenient fashion than could Afrikanerdom. In addition racist ideology was, for Afrikaner nationalism, a two-edged political instrument. For it could be used not only to maintain and expand Afrikaner unity and solidarity, but also as a political weapon with which to attack and accuse the mining magnates and their political representatives (Smuts and the South African Party, later Smuts and the United Party) for their *laissez-faire* social and economic policy of 'selling the white man down the river for a pot of gold'.⁶ Consequently Afrikaner nationalism was virtually bound to utilize the highly inflammable race issue as an ideological (political) weapon with which to obtain power.

The failure of the mining magnates and English-speaking politicians in

⁶ After the struggle with British Imperialism over the gold-bearing reefs of the Transvaal, the Chamber of Mines, with its 'economic rationality' of replacing highly paid white workers with lesser paid black labour, was seen by Afrikanerdom as the major threat to the white man's privileged existence.

general to withstand the onslaught of the Nationalists' strident racial ideology of 'dominate or be dominated' lies, not only in the developments outlined above, but also in the contradictions inherent in English-speaking capitalism's ends. In essence these may be said to be, and indeed remain, the implementation of a *laissez-faire* liberal (modelled on 19th-century English politics) and individualist (i.e. ultimately colour-blind) policy upon the foundations of a racially authoritarian capitalist system. That is, the initiators of South Africa's industrial economy, the English mineowners, readily accepted the South African master-servant (dominant/subordinate) racial social structure that already existed prior to the opening up of the mining industry. In fact, they have gone further, and have co-operated with the State (especially after the 1922 Rand Strike when the mineowners lost their battle for cheap black labour at the expense of the much more highly paid white labour⁷) in buttressing and perpetuating South Africa's racial socio-economic system in order to control and monopolize the wage and work structure of the unskilled African labour force and so maximize their outputs and profits.⁸

This requirement of a plentiful and continuous supply of cheap black labour has meant that the British mineowners have consistently had one vital economic interest in common with Afrikanerdom (i.e. the Afrikaner farmer). As Lewin has suggested, this common economic interest would then explain the willingness of the English to abandon any thought of using their military victory in 1902 to impose the Cape's non-racial franchise policy on the rest of South Africa. It would also explain their failure, in their struggle with Afrikaner nationalism, to seek political allies amongst South Africa's non-white population.⁹ As a consequence of this situation, the English-speaking people have, in general, been mainly conciliatory in their dealings with Afrikanerdom; the predominantly English-speaking United Party's racial policy has remained consistently equivocal. That is, it has in the main merely followed the trail blazed by the Nationalists. Thus, by presenting the white electorate with nothing more than a modified and insipid form of Apartheid, the UP has moved in behind the Nationalists' extreme

⁷ The headquarters of the strike during its final stages were in the offices of the Communist Party. Roux comments: 'The Afrikaner strikers sang the "Red Flag" in English to the tune of the old republican "Volkslied", and the "Marxist Socialists", not to be outdone, refurbished an old May Day Banner so that its slogan read, "Workers of the World fight and unite for a White South Africa." E. Roux: *Time Longer Than Rope: A History of the Struggle of the Black Man for Freedom in South Africa*, 1964. (Roux's emphasis.)

⁸ The nub of the mineowners' policy is revealed in the Lansdowne Commission's Report of 1944. The Commission was appointed to investigate African mine-workers' wages, there having been no significant wage increase since 1914. The Commission noted that the Chamber of Mines' argument against wage increases based its case very largely on the argument that, in fixing the wage of mine labourers and in determining whether the wages so fixed are adequate, it is entitled to take cognizance of the full subsistence which a native is able to obtain from his holding in the Reserve. (cf. R. Horwitz: *op. cit.*, p. 341). Thus the mineowners wage-policy was that an African man's family had to be supported by the rest of the family in the Reserve. In essence, the Reserve family was to subsidize the mineowners. This wage-scale policy was then adopted by secondary industry. As Horwitz remarks, 'What is good for the Chamber of Mines, is good for South Africa.'

⁹ cf. J. Lewin: *Politics and Law in South Africa*, 1963.

'dominate or be dominated' racial 'definition of the situation', and collaborated in and further exacerbated the narrow and increasing rigid designations of the arena in which white South Africa's political dialogue can take place.

Omnipresent Racism

The contemporary omnipresence of racism in South Africa is upheld through social and penal sanctions which intertwine to affect the socialization process whereby race differentiation is embedded in and defines the white man's 'social definition of reality'; his 'common sense view of the world'; his expectations of others, particularly the non-white; his future desires and hopes. The depth of this embeddedness, race consciousness in South Africa's socio-political structures and in every way of life must be comprehended if the fatuity of the reformist optimistic belief in the 'withering away' of race discrimination and prejudice before the exigencies of 'economic rationality' is to be fully appreciated.

In the South African situation racial discrimination has become detached from its original historical conjunction with manual labour, conflict over land, and general economic deprivation and capital exploitation. Furthermore, and more crucially, racial discrimination in its mythical or ideological form has become detached from its original extreme proselytizers, the previous and present-day (Nationalist) political elite; that is, in so far as the white electorate firmly and intrinsically holds white superiority/non-white inferiority to be true, despite functional explanations to the contrary. Now inasmuch as racial ideology has become detached from its functional origins, so it has become a relatively autonomous, but real entity. *The upshot of which is that in its consequences it has unintended sequels for its initiators, and its successors.* This has, as will be seen, vitally important repercussions for any political analysis of South Africa and her future development.

The heightening of racial consciousness in South Africa, through the deliberate use of penal sanctions, has in the main taken place since the Nationalist Party came to power (1948). This is a consequence of the party's racial ideology; its endeavours to unite the white (English/Afrikaner) segment under its leadership, and to maintain and increase its domination over the non-white population. Kuper lists three particular techniques for the heightening of racial consciousness, and applies these to developments in South Africa since the Second World War.

Firstly, the weaving of racial classification into the perception of the individual. The consequence of this is that the individual, in his social perception of reality, is led to apply racial definitions over a very broad range of social situations. For example: the unambiguous method of racial classification introduced by the Nationalists with the Population Registration Act of 1950, which specifically classifies each person according to race; the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949; the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950. Thus within two years of the

achieving power, the Nationalists had endeavoured to ensure by law the 'purity' of the 'pigmented aristocracy'.

Secondly, the extension of the range of situations in which racial classification is mandatory as a guide to conduct. In terms of the more prominent laws introduced by the Nationalists, the following social situations are based on racial criteria: marriage; 'illicit carnal intercourse'; proximity between neighbours and traders; inclusion on a common electoral role; school and university education; industrial reconciliation machinery for Africans; racial reservation of occupations; control of contact between races in clubs, hospitals, places of entertainment and public assemblies; occupation of premises for a substantial period of time. 'In consequence', writes Kuper, 'the racial concept becomes increasingly weighted with social and cultural connotations.'

Thirdly, a system of punishment and rewards was introduced. (a) As Kuper points out, racial segregation in South Africa is highly discriminatory and is often immediately rewarding to those who impose it. In particular the increasingly vast bureaucracy which is needed in order to implement these discriminatory acts offers new occupational opportunities in State and local administration, with rewards of office stimulating conscientious devotion both to racialism and the Nationalist government. (b) For the non-whites, rewards and punishments reinforce the system, with penal sanctions which fall more heavily on their shoulders than on the whites. Finally, political activity is demarcated along racial lines. 'Political activity', writes Kuper, 'pressure towards conservatism or towards revolution is essentially racial and serves to heighten racial consciousness.'¹⁰

Heightened racial consciousness does not necessarily lead to an increase in racial prejudice. But when it is channelled in this direction by unfavourable stereotypes of other races, and by policies and ideologies which create or intensify competition between the races, it is very likely to be itself intensified. Certainly in the case of South Africa's many racial laws, an image is compounded of unfavourable qualities. Thus the idea arises that other races are unfit as sexual partners, etc. 'These laws, policies and ideologies', writes Kuper, 'presumably encourage conflict in racial contact, since there is an ideological expectation of conflict. Race consciousness is canalized in a sharply antagonistic form. . . .' And furthermore, 'as a result of systematic discrimination, the white man will find himself consistently in a position of superiority and this routine experience may be expected to re-inforce sentiments of superiority expressed in the demand for its maintenance and perhaps its enhancement by further discrimination.'¹¹

Consequently, in the context of the political situation in South Africa, as generations of her white politicians, particularly Nationalist politicians, have persistently defined and emphasized the situation in terms of race conflict, thereby heightening racial tension and antagonisms in

¹⁰ cf. L. Kuper: *The Heightening of Racial Tension*, *Race* Vol. 2 No. 1, November 1960.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*

the minds of the white electorate; so this electorate has in turn become even more race-conscious and as a result made consistent demands upon the politicians that *they uphold and consolidate white supremacy. The white electorate's racial prejudices thereby rebound back upon the politician who, in consequence, themselves become increasingly confined and circumscribed by their own racial ideology. In its unintended consequences the ideology of race becomes its 'ideology' and becomes an additional independent variable, as significant as the economic base, in the future development of South Africa.*

Economic Progress and Racism

As the reformist argument itself suggests, the present situation in South Africa is conspicuous for the inherent contradictions that exist in its socio-economic and socio-political system (i.e. between the 'objective' integrationist requirements of the economy and the 'subjective' desires and fears of the white population intent on maintaining its privileged position), and for the inability of the dominant white segment to find a 'satisfactory' solution to these contradictions.

The 1961 Educational Panel Report, basing its analysis on the government's own economic development programme (for a 5½ per cent growth rate), states that if all the work at present undertaken by whites continues to be done by them, by 1969 there will be an absolute shortage of 47,000 workers, while there will be a substantial number of unemployed non-whites. 'These figures do no more', says the Panel, 'than illustrate the fact that in an expanding economy there can, in fact, be no immovable boundary between the work done by whites and that done by non-whites.' The estimate for the economy's requirements for 'skilled occupations' in 1980 is 3,330,000 with over half this for (1,780,000) being non-white. This compares with a figure of approximately 1,450,000 for 1960, with 40 per cent being non-white. (If the semi-skilled occupations are also included, the comparative racial figures read: 1960: 53.5 per cent white and 46.5 per cent non-white. Estimated 1980 figures: 33.2 per cent white; 66.8 per cent non-white. In terms of the necessary expansion of education, two thirds of the students passing Standard Ten ('O' Level plus one year) will have to be non-whites. Furthermore, there will have to be twice as many non-whites in Standards 7-10 by 1980.¹² In the light of these figures Apartheid will apparently have to be consigned to the 'dustbin of history' within some 10 to 15 years. Can this plausible logic really be accepted?

Furthermore, the economic reformist thesis suggests that in South Africa 'economic rationality urges the polity forward beyond its ideology'. However, in so far as this argument posits a direct conflict between (economic) rationality and (racial) ideology, it ignores the fact that what has taken place in South Africa is rather an intertwining between the economic and the political orders. It thus fails to recognise that men making rational economic decisions, *within the context of a traditionally and deliberately racially stratified society*, are likely to take in

¹² Cf. *Education and the South African Economy: The 1961 Educational Panel Report*, 1966.

account this factor of racial discrimination—even to the extent of maintaining and reinforcing it—as indeed has been the case with the mineowners.

As has been shown, in South Africa racially discriminatory beliefs have become, through the effects of the 'self-fulfilling prophecy', not only deeply embedded in the 'South African way of life', but also reified into a real and relatively autonomous entity. The question then arises for the reformists precisely how the vicious circle of the racial 'self-fulfilling prophecy' is to be broken? And, furthermore, whether it can be broken *in time* to forestall a revolutionary upheaval?

Merton suggests that the only ultimate solution to the problem is that, 'the initial definition of the situation which has set the circle in motion must be abandoned.' He continues, 'only when the original assumption is questioned, and a new definition of the situation is introduced, does the consequent flow of events give the lie to the assumption. Only then does the belief no longer father the reality.'¹³ However the question which then emerges is specifically what socio-political forces, or in terms of the reformist argument what group from within the dominant white segment, is in the position, or will arise in time in South Africa, to undertake and produce the required new 'definition of the situation', i.e. the new ideology? The ability of the entrenched white segment to adapt itself to changing circumstances and re-define radically the present South African racial situation would, in terms of our analysis, appear remote. Particularly as the situation is further exacerbated by the predominant element of fear which is endemic and pathological amongst the majority of the white population. As Marx wrote, 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.'

Trends in White Politics

Disputes among the ruling Afrikaner group are traditionally blown up by an opposition eager to see the demise of the Nationalist government. Nevertheless, the inherent contradictions between the reality of the economic situation and the Nationalists' racial ideology are likely to cause increasing friction between competing elements in Nationalist Afrikaner circles. The current clash between the 'Verligtes' (enlightened) and the 'Verkrampes' (ultra-conservative) groups in the Nationalist Party are indicative of the split between Nationalist theory and practice. On the surface this dispute is interpreted as a conflict between the Verligtes who 'like to present Apartheid against an ethical background regardless of all the obvious injustices' and the Verkrampes who 'do not much care about justifying Apartheid policy so long as it obtains what they want'.¹⁴ However, beneath the surface of this naïve

¹³ R. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1957, p. 425.

¹⁴ Helen Suzman, reported in *The Star*, Johannesburg, July 29th 1967. cf. also: *The Guardian*, September 9th 1967, South African Nationalists Fall Out; *New Statesman*, 16th August 1968, Stanley Uys: South Africa's Screwed-Up Ones.

explanation, more serious differences may be perceived. Having assumed power in 1948, Afrikaner Nationalism has since then concentrated, not only upon maintaining its political domination, but also upon working towards an economic domination of South Africa—to the exclusion wherever possible of their English-speaking rivals. This concentration on economic expansion and domination has resulted in the growth of a specific Afrikaner capitalist class. Given the preconceived interests and ends of such a class, they will be concerned to open up the economy and will consequently seek gradual economic, though not necessarily political, reforms.

The Verkrampptes on the other hand are anxious to maintain white domination at, apparently, all costs. This group is likely to draw its support from those sections at the bottom of the white economic ladder. It is not so much that their economic situation need be threatened by open competition from the non-whites; within an expanding economy such as South Africa's, it is conceivable that the maintenance of 'white protectionism' could mean, not that the non-whites would be barred from skilled and semi-skilled occupations, but rather that wage and salary distinctions would continue to be based on colour (e.g. a white clerk would simply be paid more than his non-white counterpart). However these lower echelons of the white population, which contain a large number of Afrikaners and which constitute traditionally the group to which Afrikaner nationalism has directed its more extreme racist appeal in its search for urban support, may well *imagine and fear* that their situation is threatened. If not economically threatened then at least socially threatened in terms of social distance and status. For, as Marquard has stated, *'the very narrowing of the (social) gulf powerfully re-inforces colour prejudice on the part of the whites who, being outnumbered by the non-whites, fear that as social distinctions disappear political distinction could no longer be maintained.'*¹⁵

The lower 'threatened' echelons of the white population could react to this non-white 'threat' in one of two ways. They might either come to see that they have in fact economic (i.e. class) interests in common with their non-white counterparts and so align themselves with this class in opposition to the capitalists.¹⁶ Or, as is far more likely in terms of our analysis, this 'threatened' and 'vulnerable' white group will become even more reactionary and its leaders will capitalize on blatant racist slogans, both to maintain the electorate's present racial right-wing trend and to sustain its racially privileged status and 'South African way of life'. Such a movement would reveal overt fascist tendencies, in that it could be termed a definite political counter-revolution in the face of potential revolutionary socio-economic changes. In these terms, this

¹⁵ L. Marquard: *The People and Policies of South Africa*, 1962, p. 118.

¹⁶ The conservative Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA), fearing that their own (white) bargaining powers will be undermined through the Africans' inability to bargain—it is illegal for Africans to strike—has recently been encouraging African workers, despite government hostility, to form separate, unrestricted trade unions to which TUCSA proposes to grant affiliation. The move is of course ultimately in TUCSA's own interests, but it makes strange reading in the context of South Africa's racial history. cf. *The Economist*, May 4th–10th 1968, p. 38: Trade Unions Challenge Vorster.

group would either take over or split from the Nationalist Party. This splintering off and continuous move to the right is to date the history of 20th-century white South African politics.

On the other hand, it is conceivable that the Verligte Afrikaner capitalists might form a coalition with the big business elements in the English-speaking United Party, and possibly also with the Progressive Party (with its limited multi-racial franchise policy) which is backed by Harry Oppenheimer, head of the immense industrial and financial empire of Anglo-American Corporation. However, faced with the impossibility of countering blatant racist propaganda by the Verkrampptes, and in fact still remaining within the original contradiction between their economic interests and a racially prejudiced electorate, this coalition group would have to suspend all political opposition and instal a one-party State. Thus, within an already developed totalitarian-type capitalist State, a form of corporatist capitalism would be established.

However, with the police force and army predominantly manned by Afrikaner nationalists from the lower income groups, it is likely that these two vitally significant forces, which are highly reactionary in their political outlook, would lend their support to the Verkrampptes rather than the Verligtes.

Conclusions

It has been the aim of this article to examine the reformist thesis, and consequently the attitudes of the dominant white segment and more particularly the ruling Afrikaner group, in order to assess the flexibility of their outlook and social structures under the pressure of changing social, economic and political circumstances. The analysis put forward here, if correct, leaves little room for illusions about the likelihood of the dominant white group undertaking the reforms, and the re-evaluation of their original definition of the situation, that economic rationality would apparently demand of them—that is, a definition that requires a complete break from dominance based simply on race. Furthermore the analysis would suggest that the arena of political dialogue has been so narrowed into the confines of circular racist debate that only a crisis situation could possibly instigate, against the white political elite, the change of both mental outlook and political alignments that is necessary if that elite is to reach new definitions of South Africa's changing socio-economic and political reality.

The fundamental structural changes which economic development will inevitably impose in South Africa's repressive racist and capitalist form of society cannot be defined and carried through except by the black masses themselves. Emancipation will be achieved from below and not from above. The original 'educator' will himself be 'educated'. Until that time, the ruling white group will continue their tragic itinerary along the road from authoritarianism to their own particular brand of fascism.

work

With the present essay we are ending the series on Work which NLR inaugurated nearly four years ago. Since then we have published some 50 personal work accounts—half in the Review and the remainder in Work (Pelican Original, January 1968) and its successor Work Volume 2 which has just appeared from the same publishers.

The widespread interest in this series points to the lack of occasion under monopoly capitalism for serious individual expression of the meaning and purpose of work. This lack, which we have tried in part to make good, is hardly fortuitous; the extent of bourgeois hegemony is manifested in the individual's interiorizations of its daily routines, in acquiescence to its fundamental assumptions. The capitalist work rationale is central to this. To talk about work other than instrumentally is, however fragmentarily, to question its basic capitalist nature rather than solely its inequitable economic returns.

A large number of these essays were deliberately solicited from and written by non-socialists. What can be learnt from them? That work for many remains a constrained, forced activity, a time of dissatisfaction, of wasted opportunities, of unfulfilled potential? This hardly needs stressing. More to the point is the expression—sometimes explicit, more often implicit—of the need felt for control, control not only of the work process but of the purpose of work. In the individual's demands, often seen in terms of status, money and self-respect, the social nature of work is clearly posed. The basic capitalist contradiction between work that is inherently social and that yet remains controlled for private and sectional ends is, in these essays, a lived experience for many.

The concluding essay is an eloquent reminder of the many accounts of this theme. As the bourgeois vision of work remains an integral part of its hegemony, so the hopes and partial demands expressed in essays like these must be integrated in the vision of a socialist hegemony—a hegemony which, in destroying capitalist rationality, creates a society which will shape the necessity of work in accord with human needs.

RONALD FRASER

The Toolmaker

To be taken abruptly from school at 15 and thrust into a mammoth factory is a second weaning. Leaving a secondary school system which offers little more than a taste of the fruits of intellectual civilization before being thrust into the relative barbarity of the industrial system, ensures that personal development inevitably depends on the occupation and the social culture of the workplace. Fortunately, some industrial workplaces do provide environments where full and humane personalities can develop.

I was just fifteen when I left secondary modern school to start an apprenticeship in a heavy engineering factory. The vividness of the transfer left an indelible imprint. One day I was a boy among boys—and girls—the next I was a boy among men. The school had been small and within it I had established my identity and pattern of relationships. The factory was immense and strange. Within its one square mile, perimetered by high wire and company police, 22,000 men, women, boys and girls spent a considerable part of their conscious lives. The

noises of the school had been the human sounds of endless chatter and the movement of bodies: the sense of space was confined to classrooms and playing fields. The crescendo of the factory was mechanical: the cacophony of machines and of the disintegrating brotherhood of meta molecules, was only punctured by the irrepressible screech of the buzzer regulating the working existence of so many people. As the notes of the buzzer descended the decibel ladder the sounds of the mechanical world were replaced by those of the workers intermingling uncontrolled for a short interval by work discipline.

Because in many ways its demands were similar to those of school where periods of classroom were punctuated by play periods, I fell relatively easily into the pattern of factory discipline. But I never fully accustomed myself to the fundamentally alien world of machines, and patterns of production not involving intimate human participation.

This huge plant which was to be my daily horizon of experience, and within which much of my personality was formed, employed 1,100 apprentices. Such a large number had created the need for a special administrative department dealing with all aspects of apprentice training and welfare. And it was into the hands of this department that I fell on my first day of work. We—that year's crop of chosen 15-year-olds—were assembled in a small hall at 7.30 a.m. Drawn almost exclusively from working-class families we huddled together, half expecting that our first working day would, after all, begin like school with the managing director reading prayers. Instead, the head of the apprentice training scheme introduced us to the religion of factory discipline: we were now men, he told us, and we must work hard and diligently not only for the good of the firm, but also for the good of our own souls. Our satisfaction in life would come from acquiring the status of modern craftsmen; we were the fortunate few who would escape the 'dead end jobs and the ignoble fate of the labourer. And with this message locked in our hearts we were assigned to different parts of the plant.

I was instructed to report to the foreman of a small workshop which produced components out of which electrical instruments were constructed. My future place of work lay on the far side of the plant, in the part which dated back to the firm's origins in the late 19th century. To reach it I had to pass through sights as alien to my past boyhood experiences as the moon's landscape will appear to the first men to treat it. On every piece of open ground lay metal shapes; some mere bars and sheets straight from the steelworks; others gigantic welded constructs covered in a deep brown rust. Besides these objects in the open space of the plant were small huts reminiscent of building site 'cabins'. Then I entered the great main workshops. Each chamber, or 'aisle' as they were called, was about 150 feet across and anything between 500 and 700 yards long. Several of these great vulcan halls lay parallel to each other. Within them the huge steam turbines which drove the equally massive electrical generators were built. Overhead rolled the girdered cranes capable of carrying weights of more than 200 tons. As I made my bewildered way through this strange place one passed over my head. At once I understood the instinct which makes small creature freeze as the bird of prey encircles overhead. My startled attitude to

the crane's passage amused the men at work upon the turbine shells. One glance revealed my newness and a series of catcalls followed my passage down the 'aisle'. Mostly the shouts were good-natured advice to get out of the plant while I had the youth to do so. Such advice never even penetrated my outer consciousness, for how could anybody abhor this great masculine domain with its endless overtones of power and violence? During my short journey through that place of steel and power my memories of school and all it stood for were largely erased. It must have been an experience similar to that of young country boys recruited from the old English shires, and then thrust into the trenches of the Somme.

Coming out at the far end of the 'aisle' I was directed to a cotton-mill type building and told to see the foreman on the fourth floor. Climbing up the perforated steel stairs with my dinner sandwiches in my hand, I wondered what form of authority the foreman would turn out to be. I soon found out. He sat behind a long, burdened trestle table clad in a starched white dust-coat. In front of him were rows of small machines and benches attended by about one hundred men and women: the men wore khaki dust-coats and the women green ones. I surveyed the scene disappointedly; it was like having been taken past Armageddon and put to work in the cookhouse. Calling a chargehand over, the foreman warned me 'not to lark about with the girls', and 'to keep my nose clean' and he would give me a 'good report'. The chargehand was a patient, worn-looking man of middle age. He took me to a small machine with a rotating abrasive belt, and indicated a box containing small brass plates. He said each had to be polished by pressing them against the belt. He demonstrated how to start and stop the machine and how to polish the plates, and with a word of warning about keeping fingers out of the 'works' he left me.

As soon as he had gone the workers near me extended the unforgettable claustrophobic comradeship of the factory. It is a friendship generated of common experience, common income and common worktasks. Out of this shared pattern of experience grows a common culture of the workplace. And like other cultures it can never be fully understood by the outsider. For no matter how hard the would-be swimmer seeks to understand the experience of the people in the pool, he can only ever grasp the quintessence of the water by jumping. The same applies to any circumscribed culture. On that first morning at work I began to learn all the expected patterns of response, all the rewards and sanctions, just as an infant learns its native tongue. I quickly learned the harsh language of aggressive friendship; the need to identify myself with the workgroup in opposition to all forms of authority from the chargehand up. Nothing must be allowed to threaten the cohesion of the workers, for only through this 'sticking together' could we solve the problems facing us. It was the instinct upon which all formal trade unionism is based.

The workshop I had been sent to was an unskilled one. The work was routine and performed mainly by women and unskilled youths, with some elderly men. Within a few days I had decided that compared with the rest of the plant it was a very dull place. The work was not very

demanding, and to a boy with an alert eye authority held little danger. I soon learnt to chat to the 'girls', as they sat at their small drilling machines, with the masculine aggressiveness which is the basis of a respectable Andy Capp relationship with the opposite sex. But above all I learnt the art of evading work and of being able to slip out and wander about the factory. The very size of the place made it an explorer's delight. And so long as I didn't attempt to enter places where my presence would be questioned, I was free to explore. These daily excursions soon made me dissatisfied with the 'shop' I worked in. It was so obviously unimportant, and contained none of the fascinating machinery of the larger shops where boiler-suited men and not green-coated women dominated.

One day about a month after starting work, and when the sheer boredom of polishing small pieces of brass had sent me out on my daily foray, I found myself in a small shop where men sat at work before large benches covered in hand-tools. None of the usual heavy machinery was present; the men did not wear boiler-suits but instead were clad in clean brown dust coats. I soon understood that these men shaped and fashioned things with their hands much as a carpenter does. With youthful lack of inhibition, I leaned against a tubular rail and watched them. But not for long; the foreman had walked up behind me: 'What are you doing, kid?' he demanded, 'Just watching,' I replied, to which I quickly added, 'it looks a difficult job,' knowing that foremen, as other mortals, are not averse to flattery. The rest was relatively easy, for I had touched upon his pride of being a craftsman. He not only allowed me to watch but even explained some of the mysteries of the work to me. He told me the place was called a 'toolroom' and that the men were toolmakers. They were among the most highly skilled men in the manual engineering trades. Their task was to produce the tools and 'jigs' which enable the mass-production of components by semi-skilled and unskilled labour.

A few days later I was back to ask this foreman if I could be apprenticed as a toolmaker under his supervision. He said yes, if I first obtained the permission of the apprentice training officer. This was done, and I found myself on a bench under the watchful eye of an experienced toolmaker. Under his guidance I was to be trained in the mysteries of craftsmanship. He obtained a number of handtools for me from the toolroom stores, and advised me to begin to buy some of the measuring tools which formed part of the personal equipment of each toolmaker. The brown dust coat was also essential, and that evening I proudly requested that my mother get one in the market.

The toolroom was a very different place from the unskilled 'shop' I had first been sent to on starting work. It contained about 40 men, all of whom had served apprenticeships. There were only four apprentices, of whom I was the youngest. The atmosphere, while still being informally friendly, had a faint air of professionalism about it. Right from my first day there, it was made clear to me that the toolmakers were craftsmen, and as such inherently superior to all the other workers except for a few other small and highly skilled trades. The ethos which has been graphically described as the 'aristocracy of labour' was very

present. At the centre of this ethos lay a strict adherence to very high standards of workmanship. The demands of the work were technical, rather than the accomplishment of the semi-artistic tasks which are usually associated with handicrafts like carpentry, stone masonry and engraving. The chief demand of the job was the attainment of linear accuracy to one-thousandth of an inch. The blending of lines and curves using the co-ordination of hand and eye as in carving wood or stone were scarcely ever needed. But the attainment of constant dimensional exactitude and symmetry was very important. This meant that firm command over the use of many types of measuring instruments constituted the essential skill required of the toolmaker. He was a master of precision tools rather than the embodiment of a personal skill. He was, therefore, more of a technician than an artist-craftsman in the William Morris sense.

The toolmaker lies at the base of the mass-production technique. It is his task to produce from exact drawings a 'tool' which will enable the unskilled worker with the use of a machine to produce large numbers of components or finished objects. In a car factory, for example, the toolmaker will fashion a two-piece tool or 'die' which will produce as many exactly similar components from sheet steel as are needed. A 'punch' is made out of extremely hard steel to the exact size and shape of the product required. Then a 'die' is made, which is in effect a hole in a hard piece of steel which is the exact shape of the punch. When the two parts are fitted in a power press and brought together under great force, then any sheet steel between the punch and die will be pierced by them, and an exact shape cut. Thus millions of exact components for a watch, or whole car body shells can be produced.

The importance of the toolmakers' existence in the scheme of things was explained to me by many of the men I worked with. It was obviously a source of much ego-contentment and status. Each man made a complete tool, jig or pinch and die by himself. While he might have to make tools based on similar principles, no two were ever the same. And since each man made the tool assigned to him by himself, with perhaps the assistance of an apprentice, he was able to lavish much self-satisfying effort upon it. Some tools which took more than a month to complete became objects of self-identification for the toolmaker.

My first task was to assist the toolmaker I worked with, and in return he instructed me in the use of all the complex and often delicate measuring instruments. The man I worked with was middle-aged and the son of a retired foreman from the same plant. He was held in great respect by the men, not only because of his considerable skill but also for his knowledge of many diverse subjects. Owing to his possession of a studied articulateness he was the tool-room shop steward. For the best part of three years I worked under his influence. As time went by I matured from assisting him to producing complete tools of a simpler nature by myself, with just a little judicious guidance from him. Later the ability to produce, largely by myself, a rather complex tool which then passed the inspector's experienced eye, gave me a feeling of satisfaction which subsequent achievements could not rival. And at the

same time my personality underwent a change which reflected this satisfaction in creating something. It gave me the instinct for creative work, and the realization that in work alone can personal fulfilment be found. The craftsman is not *socially* superior because he can perform a given task which others cannot, he is *personally* superior because within his work he can find himself. The tragedy of most industrial occupations is their inability to afford satisfaction at this personal level.

The work in the toolroom was one of the very few places in that massive factory where no payments by results systems applied. The men were paid a standard bonus rate which was supposed to keep their wages above the best-paid bonus workers. This absence of time-measured output working was in striking contrast to the large machine shop which lay next to the toolroom. This shop was made up of capstan lathes operated by union-classified semi-skilled workers on regressive bonus systems of payment. The majority worked extremely hard in order to achieve maximum earnings. Tension pervaded the atmosphere as insidiously as the smell of the cooling oil used in the lathes. The relationship was not the comparatively congenial one between the craftsman and his work; but one of worker and machine, working as fast as the man was capable of in order to maximize the 'cash nexus'. Every now and again the tension would surface in a row over the price set by the 'rate-fixer' for the bonus paid for so much hourly output. The row usually took the form of a conflict between the man concerned and the shop steward, and the rate-fixer supported by the foreman. Sometimes even physical violence against the rate-fixer might be threatened, or the shop-steward might call a temporary stoppage; but more usually a long bitter harangue over the rate-fixer's price would ensue.

By comparison the life of the toolroom was harmonious and peaceful. Neither was there any love lost between the two shops. The differences in status and 'cultures' of the two shops would no doubt have been undetectable to the outsider; but just like the Indian caste system, the shades and nuances were living, vivid realities to the participants. Both shops formed separate social units or 'in-groups', and little real contact was ever made, which beyond all doubt was due to the separate influences developed by the very different types of work and methods of payment. It provided an excellent example of a division within a social class.

My daily life throughout the four years I spent as an apprentice tool-maker followed an orderly pattern of existence. Each morning, winter and summer, my mother got me out of bed at 6 a.m., prepared breakfast and cut my sandwiches. By 6.45 I was on my bike and ready for the six-mile cycle journey I made each day to work. My father, a brick-layer, stayed in bed a little longer, as he worked locally. My two working sisters rose much later, as they held local office jobs; the youngest in the family, boy and girl twins, were still at school. The six miles had to be pedalled away before the 7.30 buzzer blew and another working day began. On arriving at work I would lock my cycle away in one of the racks which contained literally hundreds of machines, and run to

'clock on' before the buzzer blew. To be late was not only to risk a reprimand, but also involved the loss of half an hour's pay.

Once at the bench work would slowly begin, and just to help it on its way the foreman would take a walk round the toolroom. At 9.30 the labourer would push a large trolley slowly down the central gangway and we would place our brew cans on it. When he returned with the steaming trolley work would break off for about 10 minutes and conversation begin. Then on until the dinner buzzer went at noon for the three-quarter-hour break. Then on again until 5 p.m., when the rush to 'clock-off' and get out before the crowd would begin as soon as the buzzer's lilt broke the air. As the evening buzzer sounded the factory police at the four exits would open the gates, and out would stream a human tide of over 20,000 people. This daily pattern would repeat itself five days a week, 50 weeks a year, year in year out. It was a pattern of working existence as repetitive and predictable as the life of the peasant following the seasons through the fields. A surprising number of men had spent their entire working lives within the confines of that gigantic plant, from leaving school to receiving their retirement watches. God knows why watches, for why should an old pensioned-off worker desire to carry about with him an incessant reminder of the tragedy of passing time, with its evocative recall of long-passed hopes and the empty years which lie ahead? In my eyes the sight of some of the old tool-makers with 50 years of company service behind them was a horrible portent of the future. Would I know no more of the great world and the infinite complexity of the varied civilizations it housed than the confines of this fenced industrial concentration camp? Would the world and history pass me by, and leave me an old grey man carrying his toolbox home, clutching to his heart a ticking demon? These fears led me to that now rapidly dwindling breed: the self-educated working man.

The work environment of the toolmaker is, compared to that of men operating machines against the clock, quite conducive to reflection and conversation. The men I worked with were, for the most part, only interested in their personal lives, and in their working-class subculture which ranged from football to beer drinking, with a smattering of pigeon fancying and aggressive sexuality. They were not for the most part, thank God, made up of that mixture of piety and self-help which the Victorian middle classes so admired in the 'superior artisan'. But quite a few had managed to steer a middle course between the excessively physical and the excessively Calvinistic aspects of working-class culture. And one such workmate, widely read and with considerable practical experience in workers' organization, undertook my political education. He was about 50 years old, the son of an Irish docker and one of a very large family. He had left school during the First World War and managed to obtain a skilled apprenticeship, despite his background, because of the munitions boom. During the inter-war period he had suffered long spells of unemployment, and *Love on the Dole* was very much the story of his life. While a still very young man he had abandoned an ancestral faith in Rome, for a burning faith in socialism. For him, socialism was a religion far removed from the economic rationale of the Fabians.

Under his guidance I began to read my way through his personal library. I cut my teeth on a battered copy of Robert Blatchford's *Merry England*, before grinding my way painfully through Engels' *Condition of the Working-Class in England*. And under the pretence of consulting him about a tool I was making, we would discuss what I had read. Years later I understood how unfortunate the undergraduate is in trying to learn politics in a university. He will never savour a real educational experience such as I enjoyed.

Not only did I receive a wonderful introduction to the world of books, but my 'mentor' also persuaded me to join the union as a junior member. Not that I needed much persuasion, for I had long been fascinated by the huddled dinner-break meetings at which my benchmate, the shop steward, would make slightly pompous speeches. For me the union was never the purely economic institution concerned only with getting larger earnings that the middle-classes naively believe it to be. Certainly, the union was the organization which we looked to in the struggle to increase wages, but it was by no means its only function, and perhaps not even its prime function. For me the union was 'us' and 'ours'. It stood between us and the power of the foreman and under-managers to direct us at will. It was the collective instrument by which we asserted our right partly to control our daily destiny. The union stood between us and that concept of slavery and degradation called 'managerial prerogative'. We never really believed that the union could do any more than hold the ring on the question of wage levels. If the union had really possessed that 'dangerous power' to 'blackmail' employers into paying high wages, so avidly believed by the middle classes, why then has the proportion of national income going to wage earners remained basically unchanged for more than a century? Indeed, one of the first political truths to hit me was the impotency of the trade union movement to change fundamentally the lot of the working class. For a change in 'the system' the movement would have to rely upon its child: the Labour Party. And every parent knows how difficult it is to fashion children in their own image.

The satisfaction membership of the union gave me cannot be separated from the satisfaction given me by membership of the workgroup. At the bottom of the instinct for trade unionism lies the instinct of the worker to be a fully integrated creative being, finding his salvation through work. Unfortunately, the normal lot of the industrial worker is a very unsatisfactory work experience of performing a fragmented task under conditions he can only marginally control. The union assists him in the struggle to assert his personality over these forces which threaten to disintegrate his wholeness. Fortunately, being an apprentice craftsman, I was saved from the type of work which so quickly destroys the creative personalities of so many industrial workers. My work was satisfying to a surprisingly high degree, and this was reinforced by the 'intellectual' discussions I was able to have with my 'tutor' without authority being able to detect them. A further factor which enabled me to reach out to that personal fulfilment denied to so many in that cavern of a factory was the making of 'foreigners'.

A 'foreigner' was the name given to things made by the toolmaker for

himself and then smuggled out of the factory. The majority of 'foreigners' were domestic objects such as brass letterboxes, fire poker, ornamental candlesticks and other house and garden adornments. Some were very ambitious, such as large petrol engine repairs for cars and motor-bikes, or even complete bench lathes. All these things were made in the firm's time and out of their materials, and then taken home. It was, strictly speaking, criminal; and if the gate police detected a man removing his 'foreigner' they would have him sacked and charged with theft. But due to the amazingly ingenious methods of beating the gate police, the detection rate was very low.

Some of the 'foreigners' made were beautiful examples of craftsmanship, and care and effort was lavished upon them such as was never bestowed upon the firm's work. One man made exquisite brass Spanish galleons with burnished copper sails. Another made a working model of a racing car engine and then dismantled it and took it home piece by piece. Some people might have regarded all this as dishonest and even morally wrong, but not a single worker I met in those long years of apprenticeship considered it to be other than his birthright. It was their just compensation for the wage slavery they had to endure, and a life and work not of their making. Through the production of 'foreigners' we found personal satisfaction in work: personal work, not alienated task performance.

Throughout the years of my apprenticeship I had attended night school in order to obtain the technical qualifications necessary to train as a draughtsman. To become a draughtsman was the only path of promotion open to a young toolmaker. And shortly after my 19th birthday, I left the toolroom for the 'jig and tool drawing office'.

I have never experienced a more painful social dislocation. During the four years spent 'on the bench' I had forged close emotional ties with my workmates. The fact that very few men joined or left the toolroom made the workgroup a cohesive unit with strong personal attachments. When I let it be known that I was leaving for the drawing office I became the centre of much good-natured banter. The usual comments were, 'going up in the world, eh?' 'leaving us for that toffee-nosed lot' and 'bet you don't talk to us when you join the staff'. Here I was, going to an office only a few hundred feet away to join a group of men who had like the toolmakers left school at 13 or 14, but to judge by the comments it would seem I was leaving for another country to join their upper class! The truth is that the rate of what sociologists call social and occupational mobility was still very low, even within the confines of a single factory.

My new job was in no real sense a break with my trade as a toolmaker, but instead of constructing the tools and jigs from blueprints, it was to be my job to design the tools and make the drawings. My family thought it a great promotion, and my mother said I should have to go to work in my best suit and save up for a new one. Of course, I should have to wear a clean white shirt: full well I later realized the reality behind the term 'white-collar worker'. On my first day in the drawing

office I was able to stay in bed a full hour later as the 'shops' started an hour before the offices. What luxury!

The drawing office was as different a place from the toolroom as it had been from the first shop I had been sent to on starting work. On the few occasions I had had to visit the drawing office when in the toolroom, my impression had been one of quietness, and an air of gentlemanliness, bordering on the posh. Yet the great majority of the draughtsmen had in fact once been toolmakers, who had studied a technical course at night school to qualify for draughtsmanship. But there was an air of sobriety about them as they stood before their drawing boards clad almost to a man in dark suits. Gone was the ribald repartee that marked the beginning of another day in the toolroom. It was almost as if some ghost had whispered to each man on being promoted to the drawing office: 'Draughtsmen are gentlemen and members of the company staff, and toolmakers are workmen and only paid by the hour.' To the external observer the status differences might have been difficult to detect, but to the factory worker they were as obvious as the nose on his face.

On arriving in the office the chief draughtsman, like the toolroom foreman before him, placed me under the tutelage of a competent draughtsman. But instead of the pally atmosphere of a shared workbench, I was placed before a large drawing board covered by a challenging sheet of virgin white paper. I had to learn how to design a tool which would allow unskilled labour to produce thousands of exactly similar articles. This design had then to be converted from a rough sketch to a precision blueprint, so that the toolmaker could follow a plan when making the tool out of steel. The job, therefore, required more 'brain work' and far less hand skill than toolmaking.

Once I had grown accustomed to my new atmosphere, I found the actual design stage of my work an absorbing and fascinating process. Sometimes hours would pass as I sketched away at my pad before beginning the less interesting job of drawing the actual blueprint. But much of this absorption was an attempt to conceal from myself a feeling of isolation. Gone was the camaraderie of the shop floor; gone was the undercurrent of political intrigue; gone was the heat of the dinner-time steward's meetings; gone was the sensual feeling of shaping metal beneath the hands. Instead, there I stood in my Sunday best and white collar, pencil in hand, taking my tea-break from a teacup instead of a good honest brewcan. All this was the price of being thrust into an occupation which might allow my passage into the lower echelons of the 'great English middle-classes'. But wasn't I really just a young working man clad in his once-best suit instead of an overall?

My drawing board was near a large window, and as the drawing office was on a fourth floor, I was able to gaze out on an industrial landscape which at one and the same time could appear pulse-quickeningly attractive and hideously repellent. And just as the toolroom had contained many men whose whole lives had been spent in the company's service, so did the drawing office, but even more so. Gazing at these company 'warriors' and out of the window at the serried rows of tall

chimneys, factory blocks and street housing stretching into the grey horizon of the ship canal, I would be filled with an irrational despair. Irrational, because had I not managed to get my foot on to the ladder of job promotion, security and relative future prosperity, yet still felt cheated and empty of real experience? Did I suffer from a dissatisfied personality; would the other side of the hill always look greener? Or was there something basically and profoundly dissatisfying about working in a large industrial plant? I didn't know.

Fortunately these workaday blues did not occur too frequently because of the pressure of learning the job and my growing involvement in the draughtsmen's union. Like most other people, and even organizations, the pressure of immediate circumstances pushed long-term problems and dissatisfactions back into the semi-conscious areas of my mind. Though it might well be that, in my case, the everyday activities I involved myself in were an attempt to solve by sublimation the deep and fundamental doubts I had about the whole direction of my life.

Many academic studies have been made of the involvement, or lack of it, by workers in their trade unions, but few have asked the question why some men spend so much effort and time in trade-union work, at heavy cost to their personal and family lives and the job promotion they often forego as a result. My personal experience suggests that the satisfaction found by some men in trade-union involvement offsets all these other pastimes and advantages. The union was 'ours', 'mine', it embodied a number of ethical goals which it shared with other working-class organizations. And these common points of direction made me and other trade-union activists feel part of a 'movement' which sought the short-term aim of adjusting pay, hours and working conditions; and the long-term aim of reorganizing society according to the theoretical objectives of socialism. The task of ameliorating working conditions was the objective which occupied almost all our energies, and the achievement of socialism was left to the political wing of the movement. Only the communists integrated the two aims, and for this reason they were very difficult to work with, as the procedural agreements which are invariably incorporated into factory-level deals over concrete industrial changes are, to me, incompatible with a desire to turn industrial unrest to political advantage. In my view a formal industrial relations system and spontaneous industrial militancy do not go together.

The draughtsmen's union was always something of a mystery to me. The drawing office I worked in, and the majority of those in the rest of the factory, were staffed by men drawn largely from the working class; but from the viewpoint of my background and experience they were middle class. For a start they were not manual workers, and they did not go to work in working clothes. They were not paid by the hour and did not lose money if they arrived late for work. They enjoyed longer holidays, a shorter working week, good overtime rates, and they were not subjected to real factory discipline. Their working life was very different to that of the toolmakers I had just left, and this was reflected in their social life.

In the toolroom all the men over 21 received a flat pay rate common to all, and as they received a bonus rate equal to the factory average—but without working for it—their gross earnings were also identical. Only different rates of income tax caused wage variations. Thus, regarding earnings, the toolmakers presented a common challenge to management. On the other hand draughtsmen over 25 received different rates of pay according to technical qualifications, age, length of service and ability. These differences could amount to almost five pounds a week between the lowest and highest paid senior draughtsman. And unlike the toolmakers, a young draughtsman on finishing his apprenticeship at 21 did not go on the minimum rate, he reached it by increments up to the age of 25.

A further divisive element among draughtsmen was the existence of section leaders. Roughly one in ten of the draughtsmen was a section leader. They were paid an extra rate as they co-ordinated projects requiring a number of men, usually between eight and ten, to work in concert. The assistant chief draughtsman would keep each section leader supplied with work and pass or veto certain technical decisions. The chief draughtsman operated at a much higher organizational level, as he made the broad technical decisions on how a job or project should be tackled. He then left the detailed design and drawing to be distributed by his assistant, who would ensure that the section leaders and their teams executed it. Thus in almost every way the organization of work, the authority hierarchy and the system of payment was far more complex in the drawing office than in the tool-room. Yet the draughtsmens' union was infinitely more militant and committed to left-wing politics than the toolmakers' union. And the same applied to the draughtsmens' factory negotiating body. Obviously, some of the differences in attitude and methods between the two workplaces can be explained by the very different union structures and methods of bargaining, but other factors also played their part.

To begin with most draughtsmen were the sons of skilled industrial workers, and a surprising number had fathers working in, or retired from, positions of shop-floor authority such as foremen and charge-hands. Nearly all had served some years, mostly as apprentices, on the 'bench' and a majority had some kind of technical qualification. They were very strongly influenced by self-help ideals and saw in their union an excellent instrument for exploiting the chronic post-1945 shortage of trained draughtsmen. Trade unionism was something with which they had had family experience stretching back in some cases several generations. Thus the draughtsmen had fashioned a union, which in terms of the concrete economic gains it made for its members could not be bettered throughout the long history of trade unionism. Yet what puzzled me was the obviously more middle-class, individually orientated attitude to work and social life displayed by the draughtsmen compared to the toolmakers I had just left. This, it must be stressed, is only my personal experience in one large factory. It might be different in other factory drawing offices and toolrooms in other parts of the country, though I doubt it.

The longer I spent in the drawing office and the more time I spent as a

representative of junior draughtsmen, the more I came to realize that the union's left-wing leadership was strangely at variance with its predominantly right-wing membership. At first I thought it could be explained by the usual fact that those willing to do union work and forego promotion were the politically conscious and militant who, quite naturally, rose by virtue of service to positions of leadership. But this I decided was a superficial analysis, as it did not explain why the right-wing and socially conservative membership, which was not apathetic to union policy, supported this type of leadership. And the more I thought about it, the more I felt that the paradox could be explained in terms of the union's policy of high militancy on questions of pay and hours. For the leadership it expressed part of their vigorous opposition to 'the system'; to the membership it expressed a higher income and a middle-class way of life: a mind-disturbing paradox for an evolving socialist. My union experience did not at all fit my political belief that politics was about class confrontations, rather it made me realize that the status and income graduations created *within* the working class by technological advancement constituted a formidable barrier to the creation of a homogeneous labour movement. Only within such an explanation could the paradox of low militancy among the lower paid and high militancy among the higher paid within 'my' factory be understood.

These thoughts, when coinciding with my blue moments of gazing out of the high window beside my drawing board, filled me with a desire to get out of the factory completely. I needed to escape for a period while I still could. To be a good designer and draughtsman involved with my union was not enough. Neither could I find sufficient compensation in the desperately hedonistic leisure-time activities which I pursued with my friends. No, my escape must be practical for I knew that it could only be temporary. What I needed were new experiences, new horizons, and contact with a variety of people with different backgrounds and occupations, to give me some insight into the many types of human experience. A kaleidoscope of condensed experiences would prepare me psychologically for the return to the industrial world I had known since leaving school. It would also help me to arrive at some basic personal commitments concerning the type of socialist society I could help work towards through the institutions of the British labour movement.

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such as John Collier's (NLR 48 and 50) to Chinese news releases and papers, to make a provisional analysis possible.

The Background of Protracted Revolution and Changing Class Structure

It may be a cliché to say that the Chinese revolution has been a very long-drawn-out, complex and painful process, but it is a fact to be remembered. Early nineteenth century Chinese society was held in social order based on agrarian landlord exploitation. It was a system whose resilience had enabled its ruling class to keep control for about two millennia despite economic change and the rise and fall of dynasties. Natural catastrophe and man-made disaster sometimes led to peasant rebellion, but the essentially localized resistance was always finally crushed by the landlord state that could organize repression on a nationwide scale. In the conditions of land-hunger that prevailed in 19th-century China each famine widened the gap between the haves and the have-nots. At various times in these two thousand years merchant and manufacturers had flourished, particularly in the later centuries but the landlord bureaucracy was able to keep them in their place by combination of repressive measures and inducements to buy their way into the charmed circle and become land-owning officials themselves. The cities were centres of reaction and consumption; for most of the handicraft industry and large-scale manufacturing, as for resistance to the established order, one had to look to the countryside.

This structure could be adapted to a dynasty of conquest sweeping in from the frontiers and taking over the system with a few modifications. What it could not absorb was the impact of western imperialism, which from the middle of the 19th century onwards forced the country open for capitalist exploitation, at first through trade on the terms it dictated after the notorious Opium Wars (1840-60) and by the end of the century through investment. With opium the West bought Bibles and the new bourgeois ideologies. The social implications of Protestant Christianity helped to form the outlook of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-64), a revolutionary movement that posed a more serious threat to the old order than any earlier peasant-based rebellion; it could only be put down at the cost of some thirty million lives. But instead of supporting the Taipings, the West helped the old order to crush them. The pattern was to become familiar: the West's intervention threw the old system of oppression off balance and made its ultimate survival impossible, while at the same time providing the ruling classes with men and the means to force its opponents to pay a colossal price for trying to overthrow it. There is no room here to list all the other risings of the 19th century that rocked various parts of the country and were drowned in seas of blood, or the wars in which the Western powers, later joined by Japan, forced further concession from their occasionally awkward protégés.

At the end of the last century and the beginning of this, a new capitalist Chinese society began to develop from the coastal enclaves of foreign power. Chinese and foreign factories sprang up in cities that, while extracting wealth from the countryside as their traditional counterpart

had done, also created it. The fundamental contradiction between feeder and fed now divided the coastal cities as it had always divided the villages; and the new exploited class, the industrial proletariat, was concentrated, unlike the peasants. Moreover the spread of railways and other modern methods of transport and communication made co-ordinated, nationwide resistance a practical possibility. Another social group, the students, responded to the new Westernized education that military necessity forced on the authorities by rejecting the old society in whole or in part. Many worshipped and hated the West at the same time. For some the October Revolution showed a way out.

When a few of the students and intellectuals started to transmit the new ideas to the workers a revolutionary force, headed by a Communist Party born only in 1921, was created. The overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911 had altered some of the superstructure of society, but the republican farce that had been played since then had done nothing for the mass of the people. Warlord, imperialists and landlords plundered the country with greater rapacity than ever. In the mid 1920s there seemed a chance that the revolutionary upsurge involving workers, peasants, soldiers, students and even those bourgeois elements who were in competition with imperialism might sweep away these evils in months or a few years. The dream was shattered when in 1927 the right wing of the coalition destroyed with great bloodshed the workers' and peasants' organizations, including the CP, and established a Kuomintang dictatorship to whose flag most of the Chinese bourgeoisie rallied, even if they had misgivings about some of its methods. Revolutionary struggle had very limited support from them (with important exceptions, notably the students who demanded resistance to Japan) over the next ten years; though during and after the war against Japan their role was more positive. The main fight for freedom from feudal and imperialist exploitation was left to the poorer peasants in the more backward areas of the countryside, organized by Mao Tse-tung and other communists who had the intelligence to build up revolutionary strength where the enemy was weakest. The working class as a political force never fully recovered from the shattering blows of 1927 and afterwards.

The epic struggles that took the Chinese revolution from the mountain fastness of Chingkangshan to near-nationwide military victory some 21 years later must be passed over here, though some comments on them are relevant to the present situation. The immediate objectives of the Communists during these decades, and the slogans with which the masses were mobilized, were: the expulsion of imperialism, particularly Japan and America; the overthrow of agrarian landlordism, whose cruelty and dominance had been strengthened since the 19th century; and the creation of a government to defend the interests of the mass of the people. These were limited aims behind which almost everybody could co-operate, but they could only be achieved through wars that cost uncounted millions of casualties. Efforts were made to win the majority of the bourgeoisie as allies.

Throughout these years the leadership of Mao Tse-tung was brilliant and vital. When his policies were followed revolutionary struggle suc-

ceeded, and when they were rejected as unduly cautious or too adventurous it failed. It was by being right again and again that he established his authority: Chou En-lai, for example, opposed him for years before acknowledging his superior judgement. Mao's vindicated faith in the revolutionary potential of the poorer peasants, his methods of building the broadest possible alliances and isolating the enemy, his military and economic policies, his techniques for renovating the Party with rectification movements rather than executions, his ability to see the main contradiction in a very complicated situation—these were only some of the achievements that established his pre-eminence among his colleagues long before 1949, and enabled him to lead a majority of them through the changes in policy that an evolving situation demanded. During these years Liu Shao-ch'i was the urban specialist who accepted that the cities had to play a supporting role to the rural struggle. From 1948 and 1949 onwards the city became much more important in the revolution, and with this Liu's own position became much stronger, founded as it was on the well-entrenched Party, managerial, official and academic hierarchies that developed in the 1930's.

The First Years of Liberation: 1949-53

Military victory created the conditions for democratic reforms and economic recovery. The apparently moderate programme of land reform brought about tremendous changes in village society, smashing the landlord system and bringing the peasantry into active political life in those parts of the country where anti-Japanese activities had not already done so. During this movement they were led by the Party to organize themselves and take conscious political decisions, working out together the class structure of their own village and the place of each family in it.¹ Although this was a very real revolution that put a strain on the loyalties of Party members from landlord families who had joined during the struggle against Japan, it left a small peasant economy and tended in the short run to strengthen rather than weaken capitalism by providing a bigger rural market.

In the towns and cities structural change was at first limited. Most industrial capital was previously under the corrupt control of the top Kuomintang bureaucratic families, and this was taken over by the new state. Private capitalist industry and commerce, however, were not expropriated, and the working class was encouraged to devote itself to production, keeping struggles against the bosses to limited and specific issues. The state machinery, from government ministries to local police forces, was purged of only the most outrageous criminals; otherwise the process of reform was gradual, depending on the re-education of the traditional personnel under the guidance of old revolutionary cadres who had to learn their jobs from them while bringing new political standards and aims into being. Much the same thing happened in schools and universities. It was in the cities that the power base of Liu Shao-ch'i and those 'who took the capitalist road' was built up. This is why the cultural revolution has been primarily an urban movement.

¹ This is best described in William Hinton's *Fanshi* (Monthly Review Press, 1966)

The bourgeoisie had good reason to co-operate. The last years of the Kuomintang, marked by chaos, incompetence, inflation, economic contraction and the general savagery of a dying order, left nearly all of them ready for change. The new regime gave security, and far better career prospects to the professionals and civil servants, while providing a peaceful and expanding market for manufacturers and shopkeepers. As many bourgeois were either of landlord origin themselves or related to landlords—their class had always been closely connected with rural feudalism—they knew that they had to earn their livings now that land rents had been taken away. Entrenched in the official structure, and imagining that they had a near-monopoly of some of the knowledge needed to run the state, the economy and the cultural and educational world, these bourgeois were very well situated. Their sympathizers inside the Party were a further guarantee of their position. Fortunately the bulk of the Party was not so enthusiastic about them.

Although the landlords had been destroyed as a feudal class, they and their children were well placed to turn themselves into technocrats, being the best-educated members of the village community. Landlord, rich-peasant and bourgeois children found it easier to climb the educational ladder than others, and some of the teachers naturally tended to favour them rather than the less bookish children of workers or poor and landless peasants.

The Beginning of Socialism

By 1953 the chaos in which the country had been plunged at the time of Liberation was eliminated, and the construction of a new society could proceed. The first Five-Year Plan (1953–7) and the gradual take-over of capitalist enterprises in the towns together with the collectivization of agriculture turned China economically into a socialist country, albeit in an early stage of development. In building a modern state with powerful industry and armed forces the Chinese leadership naturally tended to take the Soviet Union as a model, sometimes appropriately and sometimes not. Nobody else, after all, was going to help. Imitation of the USSR was carried to occasionally absurd lengths for some years. Among the results was the creation of an elite of state and Party officials, senior officers and top intellectuals, all carefully ranked and graded with wide variations in pay and privilege. With the rapid growth of Soviet-style industry the working class expanded fast as young people flocked from the villages to the regular hours, good money, security and convenience of city life. Compared with most of the peasantry, they were very well off. Soviet influence in the countryside was much less. The Chinese knew its own villages far too well to need much help in their re-organisation.

The Communist Party, never a monolith, came under new strains with the enormous change from rebellion in the countryside to leadership of the nation. After 1949 one could join the Party without necessarily being ready to die for it. Membership meant discipline and hard work, but it offered power. Bourgeois intellectuals were encouraged to join. Old Party members were inevitably tempted to enjoy an easier life after the long, hard decades of struggle; many had joined to drive out

the Japanese or overthrow the landlords and Chiang Kai-shek, who socialism must have seemed remote and theoretical. It is greatly to the credit of the membership as a whole that they were able to prepare themselves for socialism. But doubts and hesitations, particularly about the forming of co-operatives in the countryside, beset the Party right up to the highest levels. In the villages the leaders who had emerged in the land reform included some who were doing well as individual farmers and hence were not at all keen on the tremendous transformation involved in collective methods of production. The issues divided society by class, cutting across the Party as it did the village.

More exclusive in its membership than officialdom as a whole, the Party was intended, among its other jobs, to keep all organizations up to socialist political standards. But it could not escape entirely the feudal influences of China's past and the bourgeois West that lived on after the system that had supported them was destroyed. There was a tendency for the Party secretary and the bourgeois factory manager he was meant to be controlling to think alike. The political vices of the worst of the higher cadres were authoritarianism, unwillingness to share the lives of the masses in more than a symbolic way or to heed their views, departmentalism, bureaucratic methods and, most insidious of all in poor country that had a long way to go, a feeling that things were very nice as they were. These were the sort of people now referred to as 'the small handful of people in power within the Party who were taking the capitalist road'. Their instincts were conservative, and their policies aimed at creating an ordered society in which an obedient population carried out decisions reached by an all-wise leadership.

They were not typical of China's leaders as a whole. The cadres recruited from the common people, old revolutionary fighters, and youngsters dedicated to socialism, were generally hard-working, simple living, incorruptible and close to the masses. On many issues these revolutionary cadres overcame the bureaucrats, particularly in the speed with which the co-operativization of agriculture was implemented. In education and culture, however, the defenders of worker-peasant interests won a number of victories, only to find them eroded by the older bourgeois intellectuals and their younger successors, a group who enjoyed the support and admiration of some Party bureaucrats to an extent that must have aroused the jealousy of former factory-owner and shopkeepers. The struggles and conflicts in every field have been much more openly aired since 1966 during the reassessment of the past that is so important a part of the Cultural Revolution.

The socialist system built up in the 'fifties and early 'sixties was of course a vast improvement on the old society in ways too numerous to mention. With all its faults it commanded tremendous loyalty from the masses, who had to defend it from a multitude of attacks from its enemies. In 1956-7, for example, the Hundred Flowers movement gave rightist elements an opportunity to launch fundamental assaults on the newly-established socialism, so that the masses closed ranks around the Party. A much more serious test for socialism came during the three hard years 1959-61, when the newly-established People's Communes (which themselves had come soon after the general spread of agriculture

al co-operatives) had to cope with bids to weaken or destroy them as they struggled to overcome the effects of natural disaster and the mistakes of inexperience. Evidence recently published shows that some high officials had so little confidence in socialist solutions that in some villages individual agriculture was virtually restored. The underlying strength of socialism, founded as it was on the economic and political demands of the poor and lower middle peasants who made up the great majority of the rural population, enabled the communes to overcome these trials and grow much stronger in the process. Even though the unit by which nearly all work is run and income distributed now tends to be a team of some thirty households, the commune structure and collectivism has been thoroughly vindicated by experience. This was a vital precondition for the success of the Cultural Revolution. It also helps to explain why the villages have not been as disturbed as the cities in most of the country.

The cities differed politically from the villages in a number of ways. While the commune member had a genuine say in choosing the cadres who made the day-to-day decisions, factory and office appointments normally came down from on high, which naturally helped to perpetuate, though in milder forms, some of the class antagonisms between workers and managers. Even if he did the occasional stint on the factory floor, the boss remained the boss. The enormously improved working conditions and welfare services, the dramatically narrowed gap between worker and managerial income, the feeling of the workers that they were all involved in building socialism, and the obvious dedication of many of the cadres made for solidarity within the factory. But when a factory was put on piece-rates, for example, tensions were bound to follow. Moreover the intensive political study, discussion and criticism meetings in all organizations made the masses feel qualified to criticize decisions and leaders while not enabling them to do anything about them.

Apart from the contradictions within the cities, there were the potentially more dangerous ones between city and countryside. Growing and prosperous cities amid neglected rural backwardness are all too familiar in third-world states under the misrule of imperialism and domestic bourgeois forces. Resistance to such tendencies in China has called for continual and conscious efforts, and here again the bourgeois elements in the Party were naturally less than enthusiastic about improving rural amenities at the cost of the cities—whether in producing university graduates in large numbers with the necessary agrarian skills instead of cultivating experts to decorate the urban academics, or in ensuring that educated youngsters go back to the villages to become peasants, or in trying to bring industrialization to the villages. Much was done, but not as much as might have been.

The Movement Begins

In 1964 the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was presented to the country as a model from which everyone could learn, and this is as good a point as any from which to trace the beginning of the movement that was to develop into the Cultural Revolution. The army was felt by the

more revolutionary elements in the leadership to have overcome the professional and elitist tendencies that had become strong in the late 1950's, when the essentially rifle-plus-millet forces that had defeated Chiang Kai-shek through the highly political techniques of the People's War were reorganized and re-equipped under strong Soviet influence at the expense of revolutionary fervour. The corrective, applied after Lin Biao replaced Peng De-huai as Minister of Defence in 1959, was political study based on selections from Mao's writings, which in their seeming simplicity are incomparable revolutionary texts. Among the other reasons for choosing them rather than earlier Marxist classics were that they dealt with Chinese problems, were concisely and pungently written in a way that made them accessible to the ordinary soldier (who had often only had a few years' schooling), and continually stress the importance of putting theory into practice. The simplest texts are read and re-read to teach basic socialist virtues, and the test of understanding is success in applying them to real problems. The heroes of this movement were not so often lions in battle as everyday militants who served the people in prosaic ways. Westerners have mocked Lei Feng or Ouyang Hai as too good to be true; but the great prestige of the PLA owes much to the way its soldiers try to live up to these and other models.

The political rejuvenation of the army showed how a large organization could be efficient, orderly, and revolutionary. What had worked there would, it was hoped, work elsewhere; and greatly intensified study of Mao's writings was launched throughout the country during 1964 as part of the campaign to learn from the army.

That same year the socialist education movement and the Four Clean-ups were launched in the villages. The first was intended to alert peasants to the continuation of class struggle, often under new forms in the communes; and to remind them that if collective agriculture had not produced immediate paradise, the bad old days of landlord and rich-peasant power had been far worse. The second involved sending large numbers of office workers, students and others from the cities into the villages to verify what was going on. Judging by the controversy on the Four Clean-ups over the past year or so, its emphasis varied between the 'rightist' one of checking that village leadership was efficient and uncorrupt, and the left line of ensuring that it was in the hands of the poor and lower-middle peasants.

In 1963 and 1964 Mao Tse-tung started to step up pressure on the cultural establishment. In June 1964 he criticized the powerful Federation of Literary and Art Circles for failing to carry out the Party's policies in their publications and reaching the verge of revisionism in recent years (this document was not publically released till after the fall of the cultural functionary Chou Yang in 1966). The following month he was quoted in the Ninth Comment on the Open Letter of the CPSU Central Committee as saying that the socialist economic revolution would not be secure until socialism defeated capitalism on the political and ideological front, a process that would take one or more centuries. As his opponents were, in his view, using cultural weapons to under-

mine socialism, Mao launched an ideological counter-attack as preparation for the political struggles to come.

The Movement Intensifies

The situation before the end of 1965 thus combined a mass movement apparently intended to improve and reform, and an intensifying struggle among the top leadership over the range of policies that lay behind the cultural disputes. That the right agreed to the movement to revolutionize Peking Opera that received so much publicity in 1964 may be seen in retrospect as a concession to the revolutionary demands of Mao and his supporters.

The open struggle became serious with the attacks, strongly backed by the army newspaper, on a group of top intellectuals, including Wu Han, vice-mayor of Peking, bureaucrat of scholarship, and representative of many other bourgeois intellectuals who had joined the Party after 1949 and risen to positions of power. He was shown at the end of 1965 to have written plays and articles that indirectly criticized collective agriculture, the dismissal of P'eng Te-huai, and other policies. What made the attacks on him explosive was the implication that he was speaking for powerful patrons, possibly including Teng Hsiao P'ing, the Party's secretary general, and Liu Shao-ch'i, who had replaced Mao Tse-tung as Chairman of the People's Republic in 1959. Wu Han's fall was followed within a few months by the overthrow of P'eng Chen, mayor of Peking and one of the most important of the party leaders, and Chou Yang; it must also have put the pressure on Liu and Teng. There have been reports of an attempted coup in early 1966 involving P'eng Chen, doubtless in the hope of stopping the attacks on the right before they got out of hand.

One may only guess at what sort of meetings must have taken place in colleges and universities in the winter and spring of 1965-6; by early summer some students, often but by no means always of worker or poor-peasant origin, were criticizing their school Party leadership in the strongest terms. Apparently this came to a head first in Peking University, an institution with many teachers from the old and new bourgeoisie that was closely connected with P'eng Chen and his Peking Municipal Party Committee and had seen much dissension over such problems as 'academic standards' and the related question of whether less privileged children should be let in with lower exam marks. The university leadership, backed by the city Party, hit back, but the rebels refused to be intimidated. Mao backed the rebels, and when the first Red Guards appeared in Peking schools during June and July he endorsed them too. Within weeks teaching stopped in middle schools and colleges throughout the country and the fight was on in earnest. School walls everywhere were covered with handwritten posters.

To criticize the authorities at this stage called for courage, and many of the early rebels were branded as counter-revolutionaries, imprisoned, and subjected to all kinds of pressure from the authorities. Then in August the Central Committee of the CPC met. Mao Tse-tung's revolutionary policy carried the day, as expressed in the *Decision of the Central*

Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (known as the 16 Points); these laid down the aim and methods of the movement in a few thousand words, backing the overthrow of those in authority taking the capitalist road as well as the actions of their critics and calling for the full mobilization of the masses to make the revolution for themselves.

In August Red Guards appeared by the million all over the country. Recruited at first mainly from students and older school pupils, these bodies were outside the Party and PRC structure. In Peking University alone there were at one stage over eighty different autonomous Red Guard outfits, all arguing with each other and working out their own policies. While established leaders at all levels set up or encouraged groups sympathetic to their own views, there was no effective central organization when they appeared. Such a situation naturally involved some disorder and error, such as fighting among the masses and some times crude attacks on feudal and bourgeois ideology and the people felt to represent them. The Red Guards were branded as hooligans; and they gloried in the abuse heaped on them by the spokesmen of imperialism and revisionism. But far more important than attacks on tight trousers were the countless hours of talking, criticizing the bourgeois line, studying the little red book of *Quotations* originally prepared for the army's political classes, posting wall newspapers, drilling and travelling around the country by the million. What nationwide organizations of Red Guards there have been were doubtless started in that period. 1966, in short, was a period of debate and ideological preparation for the power struggles to come.

The debates were not confined to the schools. Everywhere people were organizing themselves and arguing about their own leadership and the line it had followed. Bodies like the Red Guards sprang up all over the place, and as everyone claimed to be defending the thought of Chairman Mao and exposing 'capitalist-roaders' there was considerable confusion. This was revolutionary democracy on a scale never seen before in China. With much of the established structure of state and Party under attack, even if by a minority, the central revolutionary leadership had to give a new lead if the movement was not to lose its direction.

Seize Power! Seize Power! Seize Power!

The storm broke in Shanghai during January 1967. The joint editorials of the *People's Daily* and *Red Flag* for New Year 1967, had called for an even tougher campaign against bourgeois power-holders as part of an intensified class struggle in which the intellectuals should work much more closely with the workers and peasants. Within a few days the 'proletarian revolutionary rebels' (a new term) rose to seize power from the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee. The Urgent Notice issued by the Shanghai Workers' Revolutionary General Headquarters and 31 other organizations on January 9th put the blame for the strikes paralyzing the city on the overthrown city leadership, who were making free with public money in attempts to buy the workers over, and were playing off one group against another. The rebels were no

longer primarily students. A significant and militant minority of the working class provided the bulk of the organizations that had seized power, and the army was ready to back them up.

Had the Shanghai rebels not taken over there would have been economic and political disaster as workers went on a spending spree while industry and transport ground to a halt amid general and demoralizing uncertainty. The old Municipal Party Committee, previously regarded as more 'Maoist' than that of Peking, had been replaced by an *ad hoc* alliance with the full backing of the national leadership. 'Rebellion is justified' was the slogan of the day.

The overthrow of the Shanghai leadership with Mao's personal approval triggered off a whole complex of reactions across the country. Had the process been the formality that some commentators have presented it, 'power seizures' would have been carried out throughout China with a lot of noise and few real changes, in much the same way that most of the farming co-operatives were combined into People's Communes between the beginning and end of September 1958. Instead the newly-formed mass organizations took their time to form the necessary alliances among themselves, with the revolutionary members of the old leadership, and with the local army units, whose support was essential to a successful take-over. The old authorities opposed to the changes doubtless did all they could to stay in power, trying to do deals with the rebels or set them quarrelling with each other. In some places the leadership had been perceptive enough to encourage the mass movement all along, and there the changes were easier.

Seizures of power took place at all levels, though not everywhere, throughout the first half of 1967. The first at the provincial level came in Shansi, an inland region which despite its mines and factories was basically poor and agricultural, in strong contrast to the rich, sophisticated, industrial and Western-influenced coastal city of Shanghai. Here the role of the PLA was more prominent than it had been in Shanghai; it 'unambiguously and wholeheartedly supported the proletarian revolutionaries at a crucial moment in the seizure of power' (*People's Daily*, January 25). As this take-over was only announced in the national press nearly a fortnight after it happened there may have been a lot of consultation with the army before the action of the unit(s) concerned, perhaps acting on their own initiative, could be approved.

The Army Cares for the People, The People Support the Army

The role of the army became crucial with the beginning of the power seizures. For while the Party as such, which was giving the movement national direction, was not under attack, its existing local leadership generally was. It was essential that some organization should hold the country together and the revolutionary movement on course; and the PLA, with the high political consciousness of its fighters, who are workers and peasants in uniform, its popularity, its generally revolutionary leadership, and its efficient centralized organization was there to do the job. Keeping order has not been its most important duty, though the PLA has had to prevent or put down the occasional threat-

ened or actual outbreak of serious fighting, particularly in places where counter-revolutionaries have been urging armed struggle, contrary to the 16 points. A much greater task has been that of acting as midwife to the birth of countless revolutionary alliances in places where the mass organizations have gone on feuding between each other after the bourgeois leadership has been kicked out in a power seizure by one revolutionary group. This has been done by sending small, unnamed groups of soldiers into schools, factories, villages and elsewhere to show the people how things should be done. These Mao Tse-tung Thought Propaganda Teams organize the study of texts by Mao appropriate to the situation; find out who are the real revolutionaries; bring the masses to unite on the main issues through criticism of the Liu-T'eng line; and try to bring about a working alliance between the mass organizations and those of the old cadres who are good, fair, good or saveable. The PLA has also temporarily taken over the running of important enterprises when necessary.

Although Western commentators have made the most of what dissensions there have been in the army command—and there have been some important divisions—the general unity of the PLA has not been impaired. In summer 1967, when the great central city of Wuhan was a rallying point for opponents of the Cultural Revolution, they were backed by some key men in the local command. But no commander could bring his men out in open resistance to Mao Tse-tung and Li Piao, however unpopular some of the local leftists may have been then and themselves, and the garrison did not resist Peking. Since mid-1968 the leading role of the army has been passed on to the industrial workers, leaving the former to concentrate on national defence.

Current problems and achievements

The main problem facing the Chinese revolution since the middle of 1967 has been factionalism and conflict among the masses. This is the negative side of the astonishing extent to which ordinary people have been remaking China for themselves, and on the whole they have had the maturity and restraint to carry on with their jobs while hammering out their differences in their spare time. Compared to any other phase of the Chinese revolution there has been little violence, particularly when one remembers how brutal class struggle was in the past. But deaths and injuries have exacerbated the bitterness created between leaders of rival groups by months of mutual denunciation and interminable quarrels about which of the old cadres are irredeemable. It is not surprising that the PLA teams were welcomed by the great majority, as they promised a solution to squabbles. Now that the old order has been overthrown by the working masses as a whole, student organizations of the Red Guard type are less prominent than they were in 1966 and early 1967.

By autumn 1968 Revolutionary Committees had finally appeared in every province. It is the job of such bodies, from the province level downwards, to rule and at the same time create a new state structure that represents the working people better than its elitist predecessor. What the new forms of government will be like when they settle down

is hard to predict. Commune management was elected before, and the workers are not going to abandon the right they have won to have a much bigger say in the running of their factories, just as students will carry on helping to run their schools.

The Party has already started to make some big adjustments. The constitution drafted for it in 1956 by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing will be replaced. While the next congress, which Mao refused to call before the Cultural Revolution, will produce a rather different Central Committee, it would be surprising if more than about 5 per cent of the rank and file is expelled, and the figure may be lower. New recruits will be brought in from those who have proved themselves over the past three years, but here again the numbers will be limited. The changes will be mainly in attitude, and some of the older Party members will have to earn the confidence of the masses the hard way. The reformed Party, now closer to ordinary working people, will be the healthier for the past three years' events.

The economy has certainly been affected by the revolution, often for the better. While excellent harvests in 1966 and 1967 can be partly attributed to the weather, the widening range of high-quality manufactured goods that China offers for export are proof enough that industry is still there. Disruptions are perhaps offset by increased output when the workers have had more control of their factories. Increased efforts to narrow the gap between town and countryside can be expected. More factories will grow their own food.

In culture and education, where it all started, the emphasis has been on serving the working people and proletarian politics rather than the bourgeoisie. Courses are being reorganized, sometimes rather slowly, to produce dedicated youngsters with useful knowledge in the quantities needed. Students, workers, and peasants are taking part in the teaching, and the political nature of courses has been emphasized. As this was the sphere where the old bourgeoisie was at its strongest and where, in Mao's view, the ideology for a Soviet-style elitist society was being spread, it is here that the destruction that preceded construction has been most marked. Time will show what the new culture will be like. In the arts the results so far show that feudal cultural traditions are still inhibiting the present.

The Cultural Revolution has done China's position in the world no serious harm. As her stock in diplomatic quarters has fallen her prestige among revolutionaries has risen. She is better prepared than ever to deal with a US attack, and her aid to Vietnam and other peoples fighting imperialism has been stepped up. The Red Guard spirit has shown itself in Berlin and Paris, and the ideas of Mao Tse-tung have been shown to be relevant to the cities as well as the countryside. Moreover all established socialist regimes are now under notice that revolutionary class struggle must continue after the beginning of socialism.

The Cultural Revolution has not, of course, solved all China's problems; nor do we need to admire all its aspects or underestimate the

price that has been paid. Coming to terms with the extent and depth of change is very difficult for an outsider. Perhaps the situation is best explained by saying that all ideas about Chinese society and politics held before 1966 must now be re-examined.

It would be foolish to write as if the struggles are all over now that the new order seems firmly established. The very chaos and open-endedness of the situation has shown that ordinary people have learnt to take more control over their own destinies. Revolutionary committees that took nearly two years to be set up, as they did in some provinces, cannot be simply artificial creations put together for the sake of appearances. The new perspectives that the Chinese people have opened up for themselves are encouraging. We must ask ourselves what we can learn from them.

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Analysis of US society on the revolutionary left has traditionally tended to fall into two dissociated categories. On the one hand, objective, statistical studies have examined the American economy—its growth rates, concentration of capital, arms expenditures or overseas investment. On the other, there have been various attempts to evoke the subjective experience of life under American capitalism—often from a moralistic or journalistic standpoint, stressing the oppression and disintegration of the fabric of daily living. The novelty of Ernest Mandel's article which we publish in this issue of the review is that it anchors the present spectacular manifestations of revolt—black insurrections or student occupations—firmly into the structural contradictions of the class society of the United States. It thus grounds subjective movements within the objective forces which have produced them, in one of the first genuinely Marxist analyses of the contemporary upheaval within the citadel of imperialism. The conflict at San Francisco State College is a concrete case in which a combination of the contradictions discussed by Mandel exploded into bitter struggle. Martin Nicolaus' account of the forces in presence shows how the racial and class character of the student upsurge has shifted dramatically at SFSC, producing qualitatively new problems and allies.

The last text signed by Mao Tse-tung in his official works dates from 1963. Since then, there have been no complete articles or speeches released under his name. We are lucky to be able to publish an informal talk Mao gave to Red Guards in Kwantung in 1967—the first time it has appeared anywhere in the Western World. It surveys the course of the Cultural Revolution up to that date and comments on the different roles of workers and intellectuals, on the relations between mass struggle and violence, and on the international conjuncture.

Finally, articles on Italy, Greece and Chile report developments in these three countries, and a document from Yugoslavia gives a close record of the Belgrade student eruption last year, which follows the report from a Prague student in the previous issue of NLR.

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JONATHAN CAPE

Where is America Going?

Today, profound forces are working to undermine the social and economic equilibrium which has reigned in the United States for more than 25 years, since the big depressions of 1929-32 and of 1937-38. Some of these are forces of an international character, linked with the national liberation struggles of the peoples exploited by American imperialism—above all the Vietnamese Revolution. But from the point of view of Marxist method, it is important in the first place to stress those forces which are at work inside the system itself. This essay will attempt to isolate six of these forces—six historic contradictions which are now destroying the social equilibrium of the capitalist economy and bourgeois order of the United States.

1. The Decline of Unskilled Labour and the Social Roots of Black Radicalization

American society, like every other industrialized capitalist country, is currently in the throes of an accelerated process of technological change. The third

industrial revolution—summarized in the catchword 'automation'—has by now been transforming American industry for nearly two decades. The changes which this new industrial revolution has brought about in American society are manifold. During the fifties, it created increased unemployment. The annual growth-rate of productivity was higher than the annual growth-rate of output, and as a result there was a tendency to rising structural unemployment even in times of boom and prosperity. Average annual unemployment reached 3,000,000 by the end of the Republican administration.

Since the early sixties, the number of unemployed has, however, been reduced somewhat (although American unemployment statistics are very unreliable). It has probably come down from an average of 3,000,000 to an average of 3,500,000 to 4,000,000: these figures refer to structural unemployment, and not to the conjunctural unemployment which occurs during periods of recession. But whatever may be the causes of this temporary and relative decline in structural unemployment, it is very significant that one sector of the American population continues to be hit very hard by the development of automation: the general category of unskilled labour. Unskilled labour jobs are today rapidly disappearing in us industry. They will in the future tend to disappear in the economy altogether. In absolute figures, the number of unskilled labour jobs in industry has come down from 13,000,000 to less than 4,000,000, and probably to 3,000,000, within the last 10 years. This is a truly revolutionary process. Very rarely has anything of the kind happened with such speed in the whole history of capitalism. The group which has been hit hardest by the disappearance of unskilled jobs is, of course, the black population of the United States.

The rapid decline in the number of unskilled jobs in American industry is the nexus which binds the growing negro revolt, especially the revolt of negro youth, to the general socio-economic framework of American capitalism. Of course it is clear, as most observers have indicated, that the acceleration of the negro revolt, and in particular the radicalization of negro youth in the fifties and early sixties, has been closely linked to the development of the colonial revolution. The appearance of independent states in Black Africa, the Cuban Revolution with its radical suppression of racial discrimination, and the development of the Vietnam War, have been powerful subjective and moral factors in accelerating the Afro-American explosion in the USA. But we must not overlook the objective stimuli which have grown out of the inner development of American capitalism itself. The long post-war boom and the explosive progress in agricultural productivity were the first factors in the massive urbanization and proletarianization of the Afro-Americans: the Northern ghettos grew by leaps and bounds. Today, the average rate of unemployment among the black population is double what it is among the white population, and the average rate of unemployment among *youth* is double what it is among adults, so that the average among the black youth is nearly four times the general average in the country. Up to 15 or 20 per cent of young black workers are unemployed: this is a percentage analogous to that of the Great Depression. It is sufficient to look at these figures to understand the social and material origin of the black revolt.

It is important to stress the very intimate inter-relationship between this high rate of unemployment among black youth and the generally scandalous state of education for black people in the ghettos. This school system produces a large majority of drop-outs precisely at the moment when unskilled jobs are fast disappearing. It is perfectly clear under these conditions why black nationalists feel so strongly about the problem of community control over black schools—a problem which in New York and elsewhere has become a real crystallizing point for the black liberation struggle.

2. The Social Roots of the Student Revolt

The third industrial revolution can be seen at one and the same time as a process of *expulsion* of human labour from traditional industry, and of tremendous *influx* of industrial labour into all other fields of economic and social activity. Whereas more and more people are replaced by machines in industry, activities like agriculture, office administration, public administration and even education become industrialized—that is, more and more mechanized, streamlined and organized in industrial forms.

This leads to very important social consequences. These may be summed up by saying that, in the framework of the third industrial revolution, manual labour is expelled from production while intellectual labour is reintroduced into the productive process on a gigantic scale. It thereby becomes to an ever-increasing degree alienated labour—standardized, mechanized, and subjected to rigid rules and regimentation, in exactly the same way that manual labour was in the first and second industrial revolutions. This fact is very closely linked with one of the most spectacular recent developments in American society: the massive student revolt, or, more correctly, the growing radicalization of students. To give an indication of the scope of this transformation in American society, it is enough to consider that the United States, which at the beginning of this century was still essentially a country exporting agricultural products, today contains fewer farmers than students. There are today in the United States 6,000,000 students, and the number of farmers together with their employees and family-help has sunk below 5,500,000. We are confronted with a colossal transformation which upsets traditional relations between social groups, expelling human labour radically from certain fields of activity, but reintroducing it on a larger scale and at a higher level of qualification and skill in other fields.

If one looks at the destiny of the new students, one can see another very important transformation, related to the changes which automation and technological progress have brought about in the American economy. Twenty or thirty years ago, it was still true that the students were in general either future capitalists, self-employed or agents of capitalism. The majority of them became either doctors, lawyers, architects, and so on or functionaries with managerial positions in capitalist industry or the State. But today this pattern is radically changed. It is obvious that there are not 6,000,000 jobs for capitalists in contemporary American society: neither for capitalists or self-employed professionals,

nor for agents of capitalism. Thus a great number of present-day students are not future capitalists at all, but future salary-earners, in teaching, public administration and at various technical levels in industry and the economy. Their status will be nearer that of the industrial worker than that of management. For meanwhile, as a result of automation, the difference of status between the technician and the skilled worker is rapidly diminishing. US society is moving towards a situation in which most of the skilled workers for whom there remain jobs in industry will have to have a higher or semi-higher education. Such a situation already exists in certain industries even in countries other than the United States—Japanese shipbuilding is a notorious example.

The university explosion in the United States has created the same intense consciousness of alienation among students as that which is familiar in Western Europe today. This is all the more revealing, in that the material reasons for student revolt are much less evident in the United States than in Europe. Overcrowding of lecture halls, paucity of student lodgings, lack of cheap food in restaurants and other phenomena of a similar kind play a comparatively small role in American universities, whose material infrastructure is generally far superior to anything that we know in Europe. Nevertheless, the consciousness of alienation resulting from the capitalist form of the university, from the bourgeois structure and function of higher education and the authoritarian administration of it, has become more and more widespread. It is a symptomatic reflection of the changed social position of the students today in society.

American students are thus much more likely to understand general social alienation, in other words to become at least potentially anti-capitalist, than they were 10 or 15 years ago. Here the similarity with developments in Western Europe is striking. As a rule, political mobilization on the US campus started with aid to the black population within the United States, or solidarity with liberation movements in the Third World. The first political reaction of American students was an anti-imperialist one. But the logic of anti-imperialism has led the student movement to understand, at least in part, the necessity of anti-capitalist struggle, and to develop a socialist consciousness which is today widespread in radical student circles.

3. Automation, Technicians and the Hierarchical Structure of the Factory

The progress of automation has also had another financial and economic result, which we cannot yet see clearly in Europe, but which has emerged as a marked tendency in the United States during the sixties. Marxist theory explains that one of the main special effects of automation and the present technological revolution is a shortening of the life-cycle of fixed capital. Machinery is now generally replaced every four or five years, while it used to be replaced every ten years in classical capitalism. Looking at the phenomenon from the perspective of the operations of big corporations, this means that there is occurring a shift of the centre of their gravity away from problems of *production* towards problems of *reproduction*.

The real bosses of the big corporations no longer mainly discuss the problems of how to organize production: that is left to lower-echelon levels of the hierarchy. The specific objective in which they are interested is how to organize and to ensure reproduction. In other words, what they discuss is future plans: plans for replacing the existing machinery, plans for financing that replacement, new fields and locations for investment, and so on. This has given the concentration of capital in the United States a new and unforeseen twist. The process of amalgamation during the last few years has not predominantly consisted in the creation of monopolies in certain branches of industry, fusing together automobile, copper or steel trusts, or aviation factories. It has instead been a movement towards uniting apparently quite *unconnected* companies, operating in completely heteroclitic fields of production. There are some classical examples of this process, widely discussed in the American financial press, such as the Xerox-CIT merger, the spectacular diversification of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation, or the Ling-Temco-Vought empire, which recently bought up the Jones and Loughlin Steel Corporation.

What this movement really reflects is the growing pre-occupation with 'pure' problems of accumulation of capital. That is to say, the imperative today is to assemble enough capital and then to diversify the investment of that capital in such a way as to minimize risks of structural or conjunctural decline in this or that branch—risks which are very great in periods of fast technological change. In other words, the operation of the capitalist system in the United States today shows in a very clear way what Marxists have always said (and what only economists in the Soviet Union and some of their associates in East European countries and elsewhere are forgetting today), namely that real cost reduction and income maximization is impossible if profitability is reckoned only at plant level. In fact, it is a truth which every big American corporation understands, that it is impossible to have maximum profitability and economic rationality at plant level, and that it is even impossible to achieve it at the level of a *single branch of industry*. That is why the prevailing capitalist tendency in the USA is to try to combine activities in a number of branches of production. The type of financial empire which is springing up as a result of this form of operation is a fascinating object of study for Marxists.

But the more Big Capital is exclusively pre-occupied with problems of capital accumulation and reproduction, the more it leaves plant management and organization of production to lower-echelon experts, and the more the smooth running of the economy must clash with the survival of private property and of the hierarchical structure of the factory. The absentee factory-owners and money-juggling financiers divorced from the productive process are not straw men. They retain ultimate power—the power to open or to close the plant, to shut it in one town and relaunch it 2,000 miles away, to suppress by one stroke of their pens 20,000 jobs and 50 skills acquired at the price of long human efforts. This power must seem more and more arbitrary and absolute in the eyes of the true technicians who precisely do *not* wield the decisive power, that of the owners of capital. The higher the level of education and scientific knowledge of the average worker-technician,

the more obsolete must become the attempts of both capitalists and managers to maintain the hierarchical and authoritarian structure of the plant, which even contradicts the logic of the latest techniques—the need for flexible co-operation within the factory in the place of a rigid chain of command.

4. The Erosion of Real Wage Increases through Inflation

Since the beginning of the sixties and the advent of the Kennedy Administration, structural unemployment has gone down and the rate of growth of the American economy has gone up. This shift has been generally associated with an increased rate of inflation in the American economy. The concrete origins and source of this inflation are to be located not only in the huge military establishment—although, of course, this is the main cause—but also in the vastly increased indebtedness of the whole American society. Private debt has accelerated very quickly; in the last 15 years it has gone up from something like 65 per cent to something like 120 per cent of the internal national income of the country, and this percentage is rising all the time. It passed the \$1,000,000,000 (thousand billion) mark a few years ago, in 1966, and is continually rising at a quicker rate than the national income itself. The specific price behaviour of the monopolistic and oligopolistic corporations, of course, interlocks with this inflationary process.

This is not the place to explore the technical problems of inflation. But it should be emphasized that the result of these inflationary tendencies, combined with the Vietnam war, has been that, for the first time for over three decades the growth of the real disposable income of the American working class has stopped. The highest point of that disposable real income was reached towards the end of 1965 and the beginning of 1966. Since then it has been going down. The downturn has been very slow—probably less than 1 per cent per annum. Nevertheless it is a significant break in a tendency which has continued practically without interruption for the last 35 years. This downturn in the real income of the workers has been the result of two processes: on the one hand inflation, and on the other a steep increase in taxation since the beginning of the Vietnamese war. There is a very clear and concrete relation between this halt in the rise of the American working class's real income, and the growing impatience which exists today in American working class circles with the US Establishment as such, whose distorted reflection was partly to be seen in the Wallace movement.

It is, of course, impossible to speak at this stage of any political opposition on the part of the American working class to the capitalist system as such. But if American workers accepted more or less easily and normally the integration of their trade union leadership into the Democratic Party during the long period which started with the Roosevelt Administration, this acceptance was a product of the fact that their real income and material conditions, especially their social security, improved during that period. Today that period seems to be coming to an end. The current stagnation of proletarian real income means that the integration of the trade union bureaucracy into the

bourgeois Democratic Party is now no longer accepted quite so easily as it was even four years ago. This was evident during the Presidential Election campaign of 1968. The UAW leadership organized their usual special convention to give formal endorsement to the Democratic candidates, Humphrey and Muskie. This time they got a real shock. Of the thousand delegates who normally come to these conventions, nearly one half did not show up at all. They no longer supported the Democratic Party with enthusiasm. They had lost any sense of identification with the Johnson Administration. All the talk about welfare legislation, social security, medicare and the other advantages which the workers had gained during the last four years was largely neutralized in their eyes by the results of inflation and of increased taxation on their incomes. The fact was that their real wages had stopped growing and were even starting to decline a little.

It is well known that dollar inflation in the United States has created major tensions in the world monetary system. Inside the USA, there is now a debate among different circles of the ruling class, the political personnel of the bourgeoisie, and the official economic experts, as to whether to give priority to restoring the US balance of payments, or to maintaining the present rate of growth. These two goals seem to be incompatible. Each attempt to stifle inflation completely, to re-establish a very stable currency, can only be ensured by deflationary policies which create unemployment—and probably unemployment on a considerable scale. Each attempt to create full employment and to quicken the rate of growth inevitably increases inflation and with it the general loss of power of the currency. This is the dilemma which confronts the new Republican administration today as it confronted Johnson yesterday. It is impossible to predict what course Nixon will choose, but it is quite possible that his economic policy will be closer to that of the Eisenhower Administration than to that of the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations.

A group of leading American businessmen, who form a council of business advisors with semi-official standing, published a study two weeks before the November 1968 election which created a sensation in financial circles. They stated bluntly that in order to combat inflation, at least 6 per cent unemployment was needed. These American businessmen are far more outspoken than their British counterparts, who are already happy when there is talk about 3 per cent unemployment. Unemployment of 6 per cent in the United States means about 5,000,000 permanently without work. It is a high figure compared to the present level, to the level under 'normal' conditions, outside of recessions. If Nixon should move in that direction, in which the international bankers would like to push him, the American bourgeoisie will encounter increased difficulty in keeping the trade-union movement quiescent and ensuring that the American workers continue to accept the integration of their union bureaucracy into the system, passively submitting to both bosses and union bureaucrats.

5. The Social Consequences of Public Squallor

There is a further consequence of inflation which will have a growing

impact on the American economy and especially on social relations in the United States. Inflation greatly intensifies the contradiction between 'private affluence' and 'public squalor'. This contradiction has been highlighted by liberal economists like Galbraith, and is today very striking for a European visiting the United States. The extent to which the public services in that rich country have broken down is, in fact, astonishing. The huge budget has still not proved capable of maintaining a minimum standard of normally functioning public services. In late 1968, the *New York Times Magazine*, criticizing the American postal services, revealed that the average letter travels between Washington and New York more slowly today than it did a hundred years ago on horseback in the West. In a city like New York street sweeping has almost entirely disappeared. Thoroughfares are generally filthy: in the poorer districts, streets are hardly ever cleaned. In the richer districts, the burgers achieve clean streets only because they pay private workers out of their own pockets to sweep the streets and keep them in more or less normal conditions. Perhaps the most extraordinary phenomenon, at any rate for the European, is that of certain big cities in the South-West, like Houston or Phoenix, which have half a million inhabitants or more and yet do not have any public transport system *whatsoever*: not a broken-down system—just no system at all. There are private cars and nothing else—no buses, no trams, no subways, nothing.

The contradiction between private affluence and public squalor has generally been studied from the point of view of the consumer, and of the penalties or inconveniences that it imposes on the average citizen. But there is another dimension to this contradiction which will become more and more important in the years to come. This is its impact on what one could call the 'producers', that is to say of the people who are employed by public administration.

The number of these employees is increasing very rapidly. Public administration is already the largest single source of employment in the United States, employing over 11,000,000 wage earners. The various strata into which these 11,000,000 can be divided are all chronically underpaid. They have an average income which is lower than the income of the equivalent positions in private industry. This is not exceptional; similar phenomena have existed or exist in many European countries. But the results—results which have often been seen in Europe during the last 10 or 15 years—are now for the first time appearing on a large scale in the United States.

Public employees, who in the past were outside the trade-union movement and indeed any form of organized social activity, are today becoming radicalized at least at the union level. They are organizing, they are agitating, and they are demanding incomes at least similar to those which they could get in private industry. In a country like the United States, with the imperial position it occupies on a world scale, the vulnerability of the social system to any increase in trade-union radicalism by public employees is very great. A small example will do as illustration. In New York recently both police and firemen were, not officially but effectively, on strike—at the same time. They

merely worked to rule, and thereby disorganized the whole urban life of the city. Everything broke down. In fact, for six days total traffic chaos reigned in New York. Drivers could park their cars anywhere without them being towed away. (Under normal conditions, between two and three thousand cars are towed away by the police each day in New York.) For those six days, with motorists free to park where they liked, the town became completely blocked after an hour of morning traffic—just because the police wanted a 10 per cent rise in wages.

The economic rationale of this problem needs to be understood. It is very important not to see it simply as an example of mistaken policy on the part of public administrators or capitalist politicians, but rather as the expression of basic tendencies of the capitalist system. One of the main trends of the last 25 or 30 years of European capitalism has been the growing socialization of all indirect costs of production. This constitutes a very direct contribution to the realization of private profit and to the accumulation of capital. Capitalists increasingly want the State to pay not only for electrical cables and roads, but also for research, development, education, and social insurance. But once this tendency towards the socialization of indirect costs of production get under way, it is obvious that the corporations will not accept large increases in taxation to finance it. If they were to pay the taxes needed to cover all these costs, there would in fact be no 'socialization'. They would continue to pay for them privately, but instead of doing so directly they would pay indirectly through their taxes (and pay for the administration of these payments too). Instead of lessening the burden, such a solution would in fact increase it. So there is an inevitable institutionalized resistance of the corporations and of the capitalist class to increasing taxes up to the point where they would make possible a functional public service capable of satisfying the needs of the entire population. For this reason, it is probable that the gap between the wages of public employees and those of private workers in the United States will remain, and that the trend towards radicalization of public employees—both increased unionization and even possibly political radicalization—will continue.

Moreover, it is not without importance that a great number of university students enter public administration—both graduates and so-called drop-outs. Even today, if we look at the last four or five years, many young people who were student leaders or militants three or four years ago are now to be found teaching in the schools or working in municipal social services. They may lose part of their radical consciousness when they take jobs; that is the hope not only of their parents but also of the capitalist class. But the evidence shows that at least part of their political consciousness is preserved, and that there occurs a certain infiltration of radicalism from the student sector into the teaching body—especially in higher education—and into the various strata of public administration in which ex-students become employed.

6. The Impact of Foreign Competition

The way in which certain objective contradictions within the United

States economy have been slowly tending to transform the subjective consciousness of different groups of the country's population—negroes, especially negro youth; students; technicians; public employees—has now been indicated. Inflation has begun to disaffect growing sections of the working class. But the final, and most important, moment of a Marxist analysis of US imperial society today has not yet been reached—that is the threat to American capitalism now posed by international competition.

Traditionally, American workers have always enjoyed much higher real wages than European workers. The historical causes for this phenomenon are well known. They are linked with the shortage of labour in the United States, which was originally a largely empty country. Traditionally, American capitalist industry was able to absorb these higher wages because it was practically isolated from international competition. Very few European manufactured goods reached the United States, and United States industry exported only a small part of its output. Over the last 40 years, of course, the situation has slowly changed. American industry has become ever more integrated into the world market. It participates increasingly in international competition, both because it exports more and because the American domestic market is rapidly itself becoming the principal sector of the world market, since the exports of all other capitalist countries to the United States have been growing rapidly. Here a major paradox seems to arise. How can American workers earn real wages which are between two and three times higher than real wages in Western Europe, and between four and five times higher than real wages in Japan, while American industry is involved in international competition?

The answer is, of course, evident. These higher wages have been possible because United States industry has operated on a much higher level of productivity than European or Japanese industry. It has enjoyed a productivity gap, or as Engels said of British industry in the 19th century, a *productivity monopoly* on the world market. This productivity monopoly is a function of two factors: higher technology, and economy of scale—that is a much larger dimension of the average factory or firm. Today, both of these two causes of the productivity gap are threatened. The technological advance over Japan or Western Europe which has characterized American imperialism is now disappearing very rapidly. The very trend of massive capital export to the other imperialist countries which distinguishes American imperialism, and the very nature of the so-called 'multi-national' corporation (which in nine cases out of ten is in reality an American corporation), diffuses American technology on a world scale, thus equalizing technological levels at least among the imperialist countries. At the same time, it tends, of course, to increase the gap between the imperialist and the semi-colonial countries. Today, one can say that only in a few special fields such as computers and aircraft does American industry still enjoy a real technological advantage over its European and Japanese competitors. But these two sectors, although they may be very important for the future, are not decisive for the total export and import market either in Europe or in the United States, nor will

they be decisive for the next 10 or 20 years. So this advantage is a little less important than certain European analysts have claimed.

If one looks at other sectors, in which the technological advantage is disappearing or has disappeared—such as steel, automobiles, electrical appliances, textiles, furniture, or certain types of machinery—it is evident that a massive invasion of the American market by foreign products is taking place. In steel, something between 15 and 20 per cent of American consumption is today imported from Japan and Western Europe. The Japanese are beginning to dominate the West Coast steel market, and the Europeans to take a large slice of the East Coast market. It is only in the Mid-West, which is still the major industrial region of the United States, that imported steel is not widely used. But with the opening of the St. Lawrence seaway, even there the issue may be doubtful in the future. Meanwhile, automobiles are imported into the United States today at a rate which represents 10–15 per cent of total annual consumption. This proportion too could very quickly go up to 20–25 per cent. There is a similar development in furniture, textiles, transistor radios and portable television sets; ship-building and electrical appliances might be next.

So far, the gradual disappearance of the productivity differential has created increased competition for American capitalism in its own home market. Its foreign markets are seriously threatened or disappearing in certain fields like automobiles and steel. This, of course, is only the first phase. If the concentration of European and Japanese industry starts to create units which operate on the same scale as American units, with the same dimensions as American corporations, then American industry will ultimately find itself in an impossible position. It will then have to pay three times higher wages, with the same productivity as the Europeans or the Japanese. That would be an absolutely untenable situation, and it would be the beginning of a huge structural crisis for American industry.

Two examples should suffice to show that this is not a completely fantastic perspective. The last merger in the Japanese steel industry created a Japanese corporation producing 22,000,000 tons of steel a year. In the United States, this would make it the second biggest steel firm. On the other hand, in Europe the recent announcement that Fiat and Citroen are to merge by 1970 has created an automobile corporation producing 2,000,000 cars a year; this would make it the third largest American automobile firm, and it would move up into second place, overtaking Ford, if the momentum of its rate of growth, compared with the current rate of growth in the American industry, were maintained for another three or four years.

These examples make it clear that it is possible for European and Japanese firms, if the existing process of capital concentration continues, to attain not only a comparable technology but also comparable scale to that of the top American firms. When they reach that level, American workers' wages are certain to be attacked, because it is not possible in the capitalist world to produce with the same produc-

tivity as rivals abroad and yet pay workers at home two or three times higher wages.

7. The Wage Differentials Enjoyed by American Workers

The American ruling class is becoming increasingly aware that the huge wage differential which it still grants its workers is a handicap in international competition. Although this handicap has not yet become a serious fetter, American capitalists have already begun to react to it in various ways over the past few years.

The export of capital is precisely designed to counteract this wage differential. The American automobile trusts have been investing almost exclusively in foreign countries, where they enjoy lower wages and can therefore far more easily maintain their share of the world market, with cars produced cheaply in Britain or Germany, rather than for higher wages inside the United States. Another attempt to keep down the growth of real wages was the type of incomes policy advocated by the Kennedy and Johnson administrations—until 1966, when it broke down as a result of the Vietnam war. A third form of counteraction has been an intensification of the exploitation of labour—in particular a speed-up in big industry which has produced a structural transformation of the American working class in certain fields. This speed-up has led to a work rhythm that is so fast that the average adult worker is virtually incapable of keeping it up for long. This has radically lowered the age structure in certain industries, such as automobiles or steel. Today, since it is increasingly difficult to stay in plants (under conditions of speed-up) for 10 years without becoming a nervous or physical wreck, up to 40 per cent of the automobile workers of the United States are young workers. Moreover, the influx of black workers in large-scale industry has been tremendous as a result of the same phenomenon, since they are physically more resistant. Today, there are percentages of 35, 40 or 45 per cent black workers in some of the key automobile factories. In Ford's famous River Rouge plant, there are over 40 per cent black workers; in the Dodge automobile plant in Detroit, there are over 50 per cent. These are still exceptional cases—although there are also some steel plants with over 50 per cent black workers. But the average employment of black workers in United States industry as a whole is far higher than the demographic average of 10 per cent: it is something like 30 per cent.

None of these policies has so far had much effect. However, if the historic moment arrives when the productivity gap between American and West European and Japanese industry is closed, American capitalism will have absolutely no choice but to launch a far more ruthless attack on the real wage levels of American workers than has occurred hitherto in Western Europe, in the various countries where a small wage differential existed (Italy, France, West Germany, England and Belgium, at different moments during the sixties). Since the wage differential between Europe and America is not a matter of 5, 10, or 15 per cent, as it is between different Western European countries, but is of the order of 200–300 per cent, it is easy to imagine what an enormous handicap this will become when productivity becomes

comparable, and how massive the reactions of American capitalism will then be.

It is necessary to stress these facts in order to adopt a Marxist, in other words a materialist and not an idealist approach to the question of the attitudes of the American working class towards American society. It is true that there is a very close inter-relation between the anti-communism of the Establishment, the arms expenditure which makes possible a high level of employment, the international role of American imperialism, the surplus profits which the latter gets from its international investments of capital, and the military apparatus which defends these investments. But one thing must be understood. The American workers go along with this whole system, not in the first place because they are intoxicated by the ideas of anti-communism. They go along with it because it has been capable of delivering the goods to them over the last 30 years. The system has been capable of giving them higher wages and a higher degree of social security. It is this fact which has determined their acceptance of anti-communism, and not the acceptance of anti-communism which has determined social stability. Once the system becomes less and less able to deliver the goods, a completely new situation will occur in the United States.

Trade-union consciousness is not only negative. Or, to formulate this more dialectically, trade-union consciousness is in and by itself socially neutral. It is neither reactionary nor revolutionary. It becomes reactionary when the system is capable of satisfying trade-union demands. It creates a major revolutionary potential once the system is no longer capable of satisfying basic trade-union demands. Such a transformation of American society under the impact of the international competition of capital is today knocking at the door of us capitalism.

The liberation struggles of the peoples of the Third World, with their threat to American imperialist investment, will also play an important role in ending the long socio-economic equilibrium of American capitalism. But they do not involve such dramatic and immediate economic consequences as the international competition of capital could have, if the productivity gap were filled.

As long as socialism or revolution are only ideals preached by militants because of their own convictions and consciousness, their social impact is inevitably limited. But when the ideas of revolutionary socialism are able to unite faith, confidence and consciousness with the immediate material interest of a social class in revolt—the working class, then their potential becomes literally explosive. In that sense, the political radicalization of the working class, and therewith socialism, will become a practical proposition in the United States within the next 10 or 15 years, under the combined impact of all these forces which have been examined here. After the black workers, the young workers, the students, the technicians and the public employees, the mass of the American workers will put the struggle for socialism on the immediate historical agenda in the United States. The road to revolution will then be open.

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MAX RAPHAEL

Translated from the German by Norbert Guterman

Foreword by Str Herbert Read

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S.F. State: History takes a leap

No previous American university struggle has been as long, violent and bitter as the strike now being fought at San Francisco State College. None has sent shock waves through so much of the society, or created as deep a polarization. Only in American colonies and dependencies abroad, or in the history of American labour before the present generation of students was born, are there equals to this conflict. At S.F. State, history has not merely moved, it has leaped.

Although it is chronologically the successor to the great confrontation at Columbia in the spring of 1968, and to the smaller-scale crisis over Eldridge Cleaver at Berkeley in the fall of the same year, the S.F. State strike has few clear lines of continuity with the overt concerns of these or previous student movements of the 1960's. The 1964 Berkeley Free Speech Movement's pre-occupations seem almost a gentlemen's disagreement in comparison; free speech and the right to organize have not been issues here, although they have been brutally denied in the process. Direct ties between the university and the

war corporations, the central overt issue at Columbia, are absent in significant proportions at State. The Cleaver crisis is a precedent only formally in that both he and George Murray at S.F. State are on the central committee of the Black Panther Party, and both were denied the right to teach. But Eldridge Cleaver was involved in teaching elite whites, whereas the struggle at State is about working class blacks. Except among white strike supporters, whose sense of political identity remains shadowy, there is little specific identification or sense of continuity, other than sympathy, with this history. Something different is happening here which requires some background by way of introduction.

Channelled Education

The so-called public higher education system in California is united only at the top in the state government. Below, it runs in three separate channels. Highest is the university system, which accepts the top-ranking 12 per cent of high school graduates, has sole power to grant PhD's and train for the professions, gives a more costly education, and costs more to attend. Berkeley is part of that system. Cheaper is the state college system, where the conflict is now. The colleges accept the top-ranked one-third of high school graduates, do not give higher than the M.A., spend less per student. The two-year junior colleges are the bottom track.

Half of the students in the university system come from homes where family income is over \$12,000. In the college system, half come from over \$10,000. That's only a \$2,000 difference, but it divides, for example, the unionized worker in a skilled trade (and his son or daughter) from his shop supervisor. Added to the difference between what the state spends at each place for facilities, equipment and staff, plus the difference in prestige, it amounts to a different universe.

The university system prepares for careers, the college system trains for jobs. The university graduate may become a professor, an executive, an official, a specialist. State colleges turn out teachers, accountants, functionaries, technicians.

Many of the jobs the state college system trains for are unionized, or becoming organized. Although the statistics do not show a predominance of students from industrial working-class families at the college, labour's attitude toward the college system is more proprietary. These are the schools—not so much the upper-channel universities—where stable, unionized working families want to send their kids. And where they have a better—though still slim—chance of being admitted; and of being able to afford it.

Lack of Continuity

The difference between the channels of the system accounts for part of the lack of continuity between S.F. State issues and the issues of previous student movements. Most of these have been at upper-channel universities or at even more elite small private liberal arts colleges. The

different backgrounds, contexts and destinations of the students create a different political emphasis.

Free speech, for example, is a more primary concern for people from backgrounds, and headed for careers, in occupations where 'free' speaking, writing and thinking is essential to the job: college teaching, decision-making in industry or government, research, analysis and publication of various kinds. Especially at the upper levels. Most state college students, by contrast, are headed for jobs where their opinions may never be asked for, and where the ability to reach independent conclusions on the basis of a free exchange of ideas will get them fired. Free speech, in that sense, becomes almost a luxury. This reflects back into political concerns on campus.

Separation of the university from war corporations is not an issue. The corporations need to take over expensive and sophisticated laboratories, the most sifted selection of researchers. These exist in the upper-channel graduate schools, not in the state colleges. The most direct military link at S.F. State is Air Force ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps). State S.D.S. won a referendum to kick ROTC off campus in the spring, but the faculty refused to go along with this decision. Getting students to stop going in is another matter. AFROTC is a low-casualty easy cop-out from Vietnam duty. Not the same politics applies as in kicking IDA (Institute for Defense Analysis) out of Columbia or Stanford.

The channels make a difference also in protests about the whole range of educational-process issues clustered around the 'university as factory' analysis. Upper-channel universities tend to breed expectations based on the liberal arts college model. The introduction of industrial methods into education creates shock there. Much protest energy goes into retaining or resurrecting features of the pre-industrial model. This happened also at State, and created two oases, 'experimental college' and 'programs', from which much movement energy radiates. But the majority remain in the factory, know that it is a factory (even the trustees refer to it as 'plant') and have the factory mentality. Protesting against the industrial revolution in education is a different (and easier) kind of politics than relating to it, finding the contradictions in it, moving on them.

This is one set of reasons why the State strike is a political jump: different channels.

Non-White Leadership

Unprecedented also is the fact of non-white leadership, or rather, white non-leadership. Organized under the name Third World Liberation Front, a coalition of black, Chicano (Mexican-American), Latin-American, Filipino, Chinese and Japanese student groups has held unquestioned political, moral and tactical leadership throughout the long strike process. Initiated and dominated by the Black Students Union, the TWLF's total campus base is less than 10 per cent. Yet four thousand students (two-thirds of the full time student body) at one

point marched in support of the strike, and 80 per cent of students have honoured the strike by staying out of class. Blacks have led student movements at Negro colleges, blacks have led whites in black territory (SNCC in Mississippi), but never before have blacks and browns and yellows so definitely led whites on the whites' own turf.

Personal charisma does not account for much of this impact. Several on the leadership can employ some of the stock charismatic traits and mannerisms, and can be extremely articulate speakers, but spellbinding oratory has not played a great role in their self-presentation to whites. There is no one figure who stands out as guiding genius or star. Nor have charisma and flamboyance, even genuine, saved several other BSU-initiated strikes at other California state colleges from self-isolation and decline. Black magnetism played a role at State in BSU's earlier relations to the white movement, but retreated into the background as the strike progressed.

In the course of the struggle the leadership cut back on jiving until it operated actually below the average level of exaggeration in politics. This has paid off in the absence of a credibility gap. It also kept the fight off the rhetorical escalator. After a day of aggressive tactics, the leadership remained free to switch to peaceful picketing the next day without risking loss of its reputation for militancy. This ability to change tactics has been one of the geniuses of the strike.

The TWLF also rotates its leaders, even when this means a slight loss in short-run effectiveness. No one man has been allowed to get functionally stereo-typed: for example, as a press spokesman, rally leader, white liaison, etc. TWLF will have to speak for itself whether this has been a matter of deliberate policy or whether it just 'worked out' that way. It has meant fewer leaders going on ego-trips of their own, developing private constituencies, getting cast as star by the media, etc. The media image, as a result, had been one of depth, unanimity and seriousness; even the tv people have learned to say 'a leader' instead of 'The Leader'. The on-campus effect has been to build more respect for the group as a whole, and to cut down on hero worship and all the infantilism that goes with it. One major benefit, in addition, has been the movement's political invulnerability to arrest. Several leaders have been busted two and three times, but the group as a whole never noticeably skipped a beat because of it.

The style, tactics and organization of the TWLF will have to be the new standard for the movement. These qualities however, will not be duplicatable if the politics out of which the style, tactics and organization grew are not also studied and applied. And these politics cannot be copied in every situation, as other BSU's have already found out.

In smaller cities, or in cities where job-racism is rock-hard, the black (and brown and yellow) communities have a sharply colonial social profile: a mass of shantytowns with a few palaces sticking out. The majority of the people live at a level equal to down-and-out whites, way below the average level of the white working class. A few entrepreneurs, professionals and stooges live high on the sweat of their own

people and/or on white favours. The narrow band of these 'black bourgeois' are the only ones who have a hope of sending their children to college. Once in college, these blacks (a) cannot raise demands relevant to their people, because the entire college context is absurdly out of reach to the masses; and (b) even if they raised the demands they couldn't mobilize the community muscle to back them up.

A city like San Francisco and the Bay Area, by contrast—because an expanding economy and slightly more enlightened unionism have softened job-racism relatively—has a black community with a less lopsided profile. In between the down-and-out blacks who have a choice between temporary menial shiftwork, welfare and crime, at the bottom, and the relatively prosperous black professionals, businessmen, officials, etc., at the top, there is a layer of (again, relatively) stable, steady-working, unionized industrial and lower white collar workers. Neither the bottom, nor the middle, nor the top of this black community has parity or equality with its white counterparts. But the black middle segment (i.e. the black working class) is far enough advanced for a state college education for its children to have become more than an impossible dream. The black workers see no reason why, if their white union mates can put some of their kids into college, they cannot do the same. Consequently it not only makes sense to raise black demands in the college context, it also becomes possible to mobilize the community muscle to back them up. Since the black working class has not been exactly docile in recent years (the majority of Detroit 'rioters' were workers), it isn't necessary to talk quite so loud; the stick is big.

Demands

The 10 demands first raised by the BSU (five analogous demands were later added by the other groups in the RWLF to make up the 15 now being fought for) reflect the social and political structure of the black community in a highly strategic way. As a little analysis shows, they were definitely not pulled out of a hat or done in an afternoon's bull session. First, the defence of Black Panther Party member George Murray, the brother who was suspended for calling on black students to bring guns to campus to protect themselves against police attacks (there had been Tac Squad raids in which BSU people were viciously worked over on campus) speaks straight to the bottom layer of black people for whom the police are a daily menace, and where the Panthers until very recently concentrated most of their organizing work. Although the Panthers have not played a foreground role in the State strike, their support lies prominently in reserve and swings the young black militants.

Second, and more to the meat of the matter, the demand for admission of all minority students who apply to the college, regardless of their qualifications. On first sight this seems like an impossible and senseless demand stuck in as a deliberate provocation. Not so. The high schools, not to speak of the primary schools, where the majority of minority people get whatever preparation for college they're going to get are rotten. So rotten that when they graduate the college considers them unqualified. The condition of the high schools has long scandalized

black working-class community leadership, and the links between the high schools and the low rate of college admissions are clear. This demand speaks to that grievance. Maybe more than any of the other demands, it addresses itself to the solid core of the black community and its needs. Note that this is not a demand for admission of more blacks under existing standards of qualification; this would only open the door to more kids from affluent black families who could afford to send them to private schools, or who can afford to live in the better white districts. It is specifically a demand for the admission of non-affluent blacks: i.e. it has a class content in addition to a colour content.

Cultural Distinctness

Third (in this overview of the 15 demands), the demand for a separate *degree-granting* department of Black Studies speaks to the segment of the black upper levels—and other levels—who have made a break with the assimilationist and integrationist philosophy of the civil rights movement and moved toward cultural distinctness in one or another form. With this demand, the BSU are following in the footsteps of the assassinated Malcolm X. Integrationist Negro leaders have long supported black history and black culture *courses* (S.F. State has such courses already), but elevation of these courses to departmental status with the B.A. at the end—thus assertion of black distinctiveness as a legitimate subject of educational specialization—is heresy to the integrationists. The NAACP has gone so far as to threaten to file suit against any attempt to set up such a programme.

With the exception of that venerable body, however, the remainder of the black community leadership all the way right to CORE and the Urban League has publicly backed the strike. After the second day of war under Hayakawa, a day remembered as Bloody Tuesday, more than a dozen of the black community's most prominent spokesmen appeared on the campus speaker's platform at the noon rally, to vow its support. There were individual defections subsequently, but no open break. While the demanded B.A. in Black Studies may not please the integrationists, the demand for increased admissions compels their support. The older generation may not care for George Murray's style, but his support among the young compels that they follow. The BSU and RWLF's unshaken insistence that the demands are inseparable (no negotiable) welds the black community together as it tears the white power structure apart.

There has, in short, been very thorough political preparation in the formulation of these demands. They are, above all, not merely demands made by a club of students in the name of a group of students. With a campus base of less than 10 per cent, that would have been masturbation. As BSU and RWLF leaders have repeatedly said, 'the demands are a matter of survival for *our communities*.' (Not for us). And 'We called the strike because of our needs as a *people*, not just our need at the college.' The secret, if it is a secret, of the strike's success lies in this stance by the leadership: think as a people. The 'genius' of the strike flows from that principle. Style, tactics and organization were moulded to the political requirements of this specific struggle. Be

cause it was clear about the tune it wanted to produce, the leadership has been able to do what Mao called 'playing the piano', i.e. to touch now one, now another key in the scale of tactics, instead of coming down with the elbows, or harping on one key all the time.

Faculty Strike

While the student leadership seems to have closed the gap that opened with the assassination of Malcolm X, the faculty strike has looked like a revival of the spirit of the labour movement of the Depression days.

There has, in effect, been a Great Depression in California higher education for the past decade. In anticipation of swelling college enrolments as the post-war baby boom advanced through high school, the legislature in 1960 adopted a Master Plan which established the three-channel higher education system that now exists. In addition to these qualitative aspects, the Master Plan contains a simple Malthusian solution to the quantitative problem of student numbers versus state funds. In order to prevent the supply of educated manpower rising too far above projected corporate requirements at the relevant levels of the occupation pyramid, the Plan called for a 25 per cent relative reduction in enrolment at four-year institutions by 1970. That is, there were to be no cutbacks in absolute numbers of college students, but a reduction in the percentage of college-eligible young people who were to be admitted to four-year institutions. This plan has been in the process of being accomplished. By raising entrance standards, fees and other hidden barriers, higher education has been elevated into a more distant privilege than was the case in the immediate postwar decade. No doubt one of the reasons for declining black admissions to the system lies in this general cutback; the principle of 'last hired, first fired' translates in education as 'last admitted, first expelled'.

The cutback has been accompanied by a general budget asphyxiation throughout the system, but particularly in the state college channel, where the greatest relative reduction in student enrolments was planned. Along with students, professors and teaching assistants have suffered the classic burdens of 'economy' squeezes and cost reduction drives in industry: job insecurity, lack of due process, stagnant pay levels, rising work loads, lagging fringe benefits. In the face of this creeping impoverishment, the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) local at S.F. State (the oldest in the system—organized the year of the Master Plan) has been talking statewide strike for more than a year. The issue on which the entire union was to go out at some time during 1969 was a demand for reduction of work load from twelve to nine teaching hours.

The outbreak of the student strike in November accelerated the faculty's political development. During president Robert Smith's tenure, which ended November 30, the faculty spent many days in continuous all-faculty meetings, looking for ways into or out of the crisis. In the process of these extraordinary sessions, many of the traditional divisions within the faculty (rank, departments, specialities, age, sex, etc.) which ordinarily help to keep the body as a whole too

internally ripped up to move, partially broke down under the influence of the formal one-to-one equality of parliamentary procedure. As students watched the proceedings on closed-circuit tv, many fine resolutions were passed, which revealed a rising level of political self-consciousness among many faculty. Being the expressions of a debating society, however, these remained entirely without political leverage. The experience of impotence drove many more faculty into recognition of the need for more drastic action, and wore down the antipathy which many had traditionally felt for the labour movement. Smith's successor Hayakawa drove others into opposition, both because of the total disregard of faculty legality involved in his appointment and because of his military approach to university problems. On Bloody Tuesday, AFT membership having been on the rise, the local held a meeting and voted to request strike sanction from the city's AFL-CIO labour council. Later characterized by Hayakawa as an attempt to 'hitchhike' onto the momentum of the student strike, the move was more a desperate leap to keep from being run over by student power on the one hand and by Hayakawa's punitive machinery on the other.

Student-Faculty Alliance ?

Nevertheless, the faculty's moves have been open to ambiguous interpretation. During the Christmas recess, as San Francisco Mayor Alioto assembled flocks of mediators and arbitrators to try to cool the scene out, the AFT's position sprang two loopholes. They did make amnesty for students a precondition for negotiation of their own wages/hours/tenure demands, but only conditional amnesty (i.e. no arrests or suspensions) *during* the strike, saying nothing about amnesty afterwards. Secondly, they did make 'satisfaction of student demands' a further precondition, but did not define clearly who was to judge whether 'satisfaction' had been attained. These softnesses, and the inability of AFT spokesmen to state clearly what they would do if the trustees agreed to negotiate with the union before the RWLF had declared the student strike over, led to mistrust between the faculty and student strikers.

Contrary to informed expectation, the city labour council granted official sanction to the AFT strike on the Monday the campus re-opened January 6, leading to a walkout by cafeteria, library and some maintenance workers. Trucks honoured AFT pickets. Thus the college re-opened in a changed climate. On the one hand, the huge picket line that nearly ringed the campus the first few days enjoyed the relative protection of the umbrella of legitimate labour. This meant that police brutalized strikers mainly in paddy wagons instead of openly. On the other hand, the striking students now came in practice under AFT tactical leadership. Some AFT picket captains assisted police in enforcing standard picket discipline: five-foot spacing, no obstruction, no loud noise. Most important, the AFT was committed to perimeter picketing and to not challenging the police ban on on-campus rallies and demonstrations. The price paid for labour sanction was a restriction on tactics, and a potential split in the student movement (and in community support) between adherents of the black-brown-yellow leadership on the one hand, and followers of the AFT-AFL-CIO on the

other. Already visible on January 7 in tactical divergences, the split might have widened seriously had not the trustees obtained a court order restraining the AFT from picketing. This drove the faculty into the same illegitimacy in which students had operated all along. After an early-morning meeting to debate this legal move, which threatened them with arrest and contempt charges, more than 200 AFT'ers marched backed to the picket line in defiance of the court order, singing 'Solidarity Forever!'

Before the AFT went out on strike, i.e. before the recess, class attendance had been reduced to between 20 and 30 per cent. Since the AFT strike, this figure has dropped another five to 10 per cent. The main impact of AFT entry has not been on the campus itself, but on other AFT'ers, other teachers in high schools, on labour, and on public attitude. Previously the strike had been a hot issue, a race issue; it has now also become a heavy issue, a class issue.

The White Students

By contrast to the blacks who had more than a decade of black struggle to draw on, and to the teachers, who resurrected a piece of Depression-style defiance, the white student movement on campus has had to feel its way forward in unfamiliar political territory and without a tradition to build on. Here alone, history has limped.

Before the strike, the campus SDS chapter had been in the downward part of a cycle. Still moving in the ideological wake of the movement at upper-channel universities, the chapter came down from its near-victory in getting AFROTC off campus in the spring into a condition of stagnation, as was the rest of the student movement. Research was done on business connections of trustees, a talented Agitprop developed, and disconnected smaller projects took place, but no major issues within the white segment seemed to be forthcoming.

Into this vacuum stepped the BSU with its attacks on institutional racism.

The quantitative aspects of racism at the college are clearly definable in terms of percentages and trends: non-whites are drastically under-represented, and their percentage on campus has actually declined sharply over the past 10 years. But the qualitative aspect has eluded such sharp definition. Relatively clear is the suppression and distortion of the role and condition of ethnic minorities throughout history in textbooks and courses. Not so clear is the question of what constitutes racism in attitudes and actions, particularly among white students or non-students who are themselves not exploiters or oppressors. BSU's earlier position that all whites were inherently racist had changed by fall to the position that political alliances with the white radical movement were desirable and necessary, but the definition of exactly what constituted racist behaviour still had large fringes of vagueness.

The energy with which the BSU pursued the attack on institutional racism had both an invigorating and an overwhelming impact on the

white movement. On the one hand, the discovery of racism in the institution gave the white movement an entire new area to pour energy into, and attracted new groups of people. On the other hand, the whites' insecurity as to the exact specifications of racism meant in practice that blacks had to be called in to do the defining at every critical point. First gradually, then rapidly as the strike action began the white movement became the satellite of the non-white.

No White Demands

At the outset of the strike, the SDS and SDS/PL (Students for a Democratic Society/Progressive Labour) leadership won adoption of the position that white students would put forward no demands. This political line put the white non-leadership in the peculiar position not only of having no analysis to articulate, but of being committed to allowing none to be articulated.

The white role was defined as strike support. The political motivation for strike support was opposition to racism. What racism meant in the last analysis only the black and third world brothers could define. Hence at meetings of the white strike support committee the discussion was of three types. 1. Denunciations of racism on the part of the ruling class, the trustees, Hayakawa, the pigs, etc. Since there was no disagreement on these facts, this type of discussion tended to be repetitive and self-advertising. 2. Denunciations of racism implicit in the political line advocated by other speakers. In the early stages students in or around SDS who were searching for ways to relate strike issues to white students who did not already have a conditioned reflex against 'racism' had to prove their innocence of this charge. Although some new kicks were taken at the dead campus autonomy horse and some other mistaken projects rightly rejected, much that would have been useful was also beaten down. These 'racism' debates did more to develop factions than to deepen the movement. Finally, there was 3 speculation on tomorrow's tactics. Having no demands, whites had no say in tactics. This did not prevent long discussions.

On several occasions the condition of the support committee became so non-directed or so close to factional explosion that BSU/TWLF spokesmen had to intervene directly to set people back on the track. The refusal in principle to raise white demands was, however, self-imposed. Before the AFT strike, BSU/TWLF leaders not only left the way open, but urged whites to get going in building a community-related movement around their own issues. This opportunity was certainly there as during the struggle the life situation of white students became thoroughly politicized. Not only every aspect of campus work, including all relations with authority, turned out to have a political aspect, but also the relationships between student and community came into the forefront as political issues. Rarely was the time more appropriate for whites to raise political demands about the political content and direction of the educational process, and the class privilege of access to it, than in the first two weeks of Hayakawa's régime before the AFT made its move.

Despite these political problems the white strike support committee turned out dozens of leaflets (some reiterating anti-racism, some containing last minute news reports, some protesting police brutality), made thousands of phone calls, and brought hundreds of students out on early-morning picket lines. White militants were in the forefront of every confrontation and supplied the mass of bodies in the struggle. At critical moments when no blacks were present, such as in the early morning terror of Bloody Tuesday, white speakers independently held a rally to inform the campus and to gather a sufficient crowd to deter further police raids. In every possible situation of campus warfare the white strike supporters proved able and fearless troops.

Student support, although of a more passive kind, also came from unexpected sources, the student government and the student daily paper. Both had been under attack, and their autonomy threatened, by trustee moves simultaneous with the strike. Having a common enemy with the blacks, they overcame past friction and swung into sympathy. The experience of widespread police brutality turned their sympathy into advocacy. Consequently, potential strike opposition among students found itself without a written organ; whereas strikers had the *Strikes Daily* (a wall-newspaper put out by independents close to SDS) and *Open Process*, a student-run arts-poetry weekly close to radical faculty, which ran sharp background analysis. Together the strike support committee, the student paper and the strike papers constituted a persistent front of radical, moderate and liberal students against Hayakawa and the police. What will happen when these are replaced by new faces or withdrawn is another matter.

The problem of relating the strike to white people off-campus has been particularly complicated by the absence of some direct white working-class stake in the struggle. To working-class whites who are not already aware of and turned off to racism, the strike does not even offer a protection clause that white student enrolment will not be reduced as a result of increased black enrolment. How any kind of worker-student relationship can be built on this basis has been hard to see. Apart from 'fight racism', the only other slogan on the tens of thousands of leaflets which have been distributed to whites off campus by PL has been a subtle variant of the regressive campus autonomy issue: 'police off campus'. Thus the faculty, which has played the role of opponent and enemy of most of the previous activity of the student movement on campus, was at first the only link by which white students on campus directly relate to working-class whites off campus. A union strike, at least, is something white workers can relate to. An ism is not so effective.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Now into its fourth month, the strike at S.F. State grows on. It has incredibly survived a bust of historic proportions to finish the semester with a thousand-strong picket line. It has become the Mother of at least three other strikes in the educational system, and the Brother of an ongoing labour strike. It has resurrected parts of the mouldering body of Bay Area radical-liberal politics, given birth to a promising

student-teacher-labour-black-brown-yellow coalition, and made it the focus of state politics. The off-campus power of the strike is several times and several kinds greater than a month ago, yet the powers up stairs, hoping for a slim inside straight in the face of diminishing odds appear to have hardened their position.

On the campus itself, the major event has been a mass arrest on January 23rd. For more than two weeks after the campus reopened on January 6th student strikers led by the TWLF in the main accepted tactic ground rules laid down by the AFT. Deriving from years of AFL-CIO labour nonleadership, these rules are designed to be futile: picketing on the perimeter of the plant only, five foot spacing between picket no obstruction of scabs, no disruptive noises.

Despite grumbling within the ranks, TWLF accepted these tactics because they were working. Campus attendance stayed down near fifteen per cent, public attitudes were swinging toward the strike, the anarchist-terrorist image was fading. There was, initially, no need to escalate, and TWLF's tactical hand has been prudent throughout.

By the third week, however, numbers on the picket line were beginning to dwindle perceptibly. The white supporters, who supplied about two-thirds or more of picket manpower, were beginning to skip day and stay home or else join in struggles that were developing elsewhere. It was also partly due to plain old raw feet, partly heavy rains, partly boredom and political dry-rot. Absence of politics in the white strike support committee meetings contributed to lack of bodies on the line.

Sitting in his office window counting pickets, Hayakawa trumpeted to the media that the strike had collapsed. This, and approach of final exams, brought a small—but headline-grabbing—rise in attendance on campus, particularly visible in the library. At the same time the AFT headed into private exploratory talks with a subcommittee of the Board of Trustees, refloating latent suspicions of an imminent AFT 'sellout'. Conditions were looking rosier for the AFT part of the strike gloomier for the student part.

The time had come for TWLF to make a tactical break. They called a on-campus rally—a repeat of pre-Christmas tactics—for Thursday January 23rd. Phone squads went into action and a thousand people manned the pickets that day.

The Big Bust

At noon, all but 200 (mostly AFT, though a few AFT went with the main body) left the perimeter and stepped onto the long-dead campus turf to assemble at the speaker's stand. The dispersal act came from loud speakers atop the Administration Building—as a dozen times in the past—and hundreds of helmets appeared on the horizon—also routine. But this time, instead of sweeping the crowd off campus, the Tactical Squad swooped in a wedge, divided the crowd in half and formed a ring surrounding the core.

Despite heroic diversionary attacks by those who escaped, (they stormed the library and drove a squad of police into retreat with picket sticks) the encirclement held. People outside the ring had to stand by impotently while police took their sweet time booking 450 people on the spot, one by weary one. It was the biggest mass arrest in San Francisco history.

Arrestees, especially women, received extra-lousy treatment in jail, but responded in kind. Jailers refused phone calls and delayed notifying people that they had been bailed out. Women had firehoses turned on them. But both raised so much bedlam that near the end a jailer was pleading with a cop not to bring that bunch back again.

The judge who will preside at the trial or trials will have cause to echo the sentiment. Having denied a defence motion requesting a mass trial, fearing that the Hall of Justice would be taken apart brick by brick, the court's docket will be tied up for months with individual and small-group jury trials. The bust is an expensive headache for the courts.

And for the movement. The existing bail resources were never designed for this scale of arrests. Bail for this one bust came to over \$180,000. There will have to be dozens of benefit performances in front of audiences with money to get floating. The necessity of relating to these, primarily peacenik, constituencies, may, mean that the question of 'violence' (breaking windows, fighting back at cops) and its role in the strike (small in terms of incidents, large in terms of insight) will get soft-pedalled, leading to possible dampers on TWLF tactics in the future.

For many of the busted and their parents, this confrontation with courts and jails had meant a step forward in consciousness, revealing something of the class nature of the judicial system to them. But this step forward still leaves them a step behind the TWLF, and exposes the strike supporters to the often-noted conservative pressures of the legal-defence process.

Nevertheless strike supporters caught a second wind, and the 'semester' ended with a picket line so massive that no amount of semantics could reduce it to insignificance.

Dragon-Slaying AFT

Meanwhile the AFT has been winning battles of its own. Having ignored an earlier restraining order, it has gone on to ignore a subsequent injunction also. And by continuing the strike in defiance of a state law that automatically resigns a teacher who misses five days in a row, the AFT has slain the dragon that has intimidated so many other faculty initiatives.

Calling the law's bluff has paid off. Unable to get replacements for the strikers, and probably not strong enough to fire all 270 of them, the Trustees via Hayakawa have 'offered to reinstate' the teachers if they

go back to class for the spring semester. No concessions have been made, however, on the due-process/hours/wage/autonomy demands of the AFT, and the body seems solid for a lot more mileage. Nobody is starving or missing mortgage payments, partly thanks to financial support in modest amounts from other unions.

At a press conference to reaffirm their strike stand, AFT members backgrounded their spokesman's statement by humming, in eloquent unison, the melody of 'Solidarity Forever', and that's how it went out over the radio. Many members who were timid liberals up against a wall a month ago are showing they have a backbone.

Negotiations Fail

The AFT's stand has come despite persistent efforts by top city labour officials to engineer a unilateral deal. George Johns, head of the city's AFL-CIO Labour Council, manoeuvred for weeks to produce a formula which would get the AFT out of the strike. Johns' proposal called for the union to be 'recognized' as one of several campus groups authorized to present its views to the Trustees, for a federal 'recommendation' on the hours demand, sidestepping or revision of the five-day law, and for 'independent' (probably benevolent business) financing and staffing of the RWLF's Ethnic Studies School.

This toothless paper was not prepared in consultation with AFT membership, and indications are that Johns had no intention of letting it come to the rank and file for discussion in any case.

The deal fell through when the Trustees balked at a provision which would allow faculty to appeal grievances over the head of the college president. Unable to salvage even this hollow show-point of achievement, Johns grew bitter and withdrew from the talks, blaming the Trustees and Reagan for what he sees as the destruction of the college.

Labour Lends a Hand

A smallish band of more militant trade union local leaders (Painters Longshoremen and Hospital Workers, now joined by the Teamsters whose motto seems to be 'opportunity forever') are finding the S.F. State strike an occasion to come together on a common project and build community alliances. On Sunday, February 2nd, a rally at the Labour Temple in S.F.'s Mission District (an international ghetto pulled in 600 people of all generations to hear the area-wide united front organization to support the strike. Speakers from these union locals, from the black, Latino and Japanese communities, from the now reviving Peace and Freedom Party, from the AFT and the RWLF delivered a long chain of brief messages pounding home the theme of unity between all and sundry, especially AFT and RWLF.

The finale to the rally anchored the rhetoric in substance. Jake Jacobs head of local 1561 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at the vast Standard Oil refinery in Richmond (a half-hour freeway drive north of San Francisco in the East Bay) reported that the membership had voted

unanimously to support the AFT strike, and asked for student help in shutting Standard down.

Although merely a tactical alliance at this stage, with neither side very clear about the other's goals, the brief worker-student encounters which have taken place in the early dawn (lines went up at 5.30 a.m.) in Richmond the past two Mondays may turn out to be as fertile in producing new history as were the lunch-counter sit-ins fifteen years ago, if not more so.

Trucks were kept out, production halted and Standard got nasty about what these long-haired freaks with a reputation for throwing bombs and burning buildings might do to its hundred megaton oilmill. The effect on attitudes among students has been invigorating.

What is at Stake

Among the hundreds of students who made the line at Standard were a busload from the UC at Berkeley, who piled back aboard at 10 a.m. to start up their own picket line outside Sather Gate. Pulled together directly and indirectly by the success of TWLF at State, the long-divided minority student groups at this upper-channel university set up a TWLF of their own three weeks ago and called a strike to demand ethnic studies. And also triggered by the State strike, a strike has been flashing on and off at Mission High School in San Francisco.

At stake now is far more than the question whether x number of students will get fitting degrees. The issue broached, now, is whether or not the class of people which includes Standard Oil, Reagan, the Trustees, Alioto, Hayakawa, the School Board and the Tac Squad shall remain the masters of this patch of earth, or whether this land shall pass to the people.

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Talk on Strategic Dispositions

*as published in Shao-shan,
a newspaper of Red Guards of the 'Red Flag' tendency.*

1. Four Stages in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR)

The first year of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was for making the arrangements; the second is for striving for victory, establishing temporary power structures, and the revolutionizing of thinking; the third is for tidying up. The main things to be done at present are major criticism and the achieving of great alliances and triple combinations.¹

The publication of Yao Wen-yuan's article² was a signal. This signal was firmly opposed by P'eng Chen³ and others; even my suggestion that it should be printed as a pamphlet was utterly rejected. As a result I had to take charge of the drafting of the May 16th Notice,⁴ in which the question of lines and the question of the two roads was clearly brought up. Most people thought at the time that my understanding was out of date, and at times I was the only person to agree with my own suggestions. Later I went with this spirit to the Eleventh Plenum

of the Eighth Central Committee,⁵ where I was supported by a fair narrow majority, though many comrades did not accept it: Li-Chin, ch'uan⁶ didn't, and Liu Lan-t'ao⁷ didn't either. We'll see how things work out. From the publication of Yao Wen-yuan's article to the Eleventh Plenum was the first stage of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

After the working meeting of the Central Committee⁸ the emphasis was on criticizing the bourgeois reactionary line. As the criticism of this line aroused the revolutionary enthusiasm of many revolutionaries, the revolutionary intellectuals and the young students were the first to achieve consciousness, which is in accordance with the laws of revolutionary development. In January of this year the Shanghai workers rose, as did the workers of the whole country and the peasants too when the January Storm⁹ swept across the country. The development of the movement showed that the workers and peasants are still the main force—the soldiers are only workers and peasants in uniform, so that workers, peasants and soldiers are, at root, workers and peasants. Only when the broad masses of workers and peasants arose was a that bourgeois stuff thoroughly smashed; while the revolutionary intellectuals and the young students had to fall back into a subsidiary place.

Isn't that so? As soon as the workers rose they smashed reactionary economism,¹⁰ seized power from the people in authority taking the capitalist road, and hastened revolutionary great alliances and triple combinations. The triple combination is a law of the development of revolutionary movement: it was in the democratic revolution and it is too in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the May Fourth Movement¹¹ of the democratic revolution the revolutionary intellectuals were the first to be awakened and the first to set things going, but very soon afterwards the workers and peasants were the main force in the revolutionary storms of the Northern Expedition¹² and the Long March.

From the Eleventh Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee to the January Storm can be regarded as the second stage. From the January Storm, the power seizures, the great alliances and the triple combinations onwards can be taken as the third stage. Although the broad masses of the workers and peasants gave an impulse to the great alliances, and although the Central Committee also hoped that great alliances would be rapidly achieved, yet the proletariat has to follow the proletarian world outlook in changing the world. The bourgeoisie has to change the world in accordance with its own world outlook. The petit-bourgeois and bourgeois ideology that was in full spate among the intellectuals and the young students, however, wrecked this situation. Each class still has to express itself stubbornly. As the laws of class struggle can't be changed in accordance with men's subjective wills we have been unable to form alliances, and the alliances that were formed have split apart very quickly and don't hold together any more. We will have to slow our pace somewhat.

After the publication of Ch'i Pen-yü's 'Patriotism or National Be

trayal?¹³ and of "The essence of "Self-Cultivation" lies in betraying the Proletarian Dictatorship"¹⁴ the movement moved into the fourth stage. This is a crucial moment in the struggle between the two lines and the two classes. Here, by the way, I have something to say on the question of attitudes to those who have been deluded. Most of them are workers, peasants and key cadres of the Party and League. We must have confidence in over 95 per cent of the masses and the cadres; consequently we must also have confidence in those who have been temporarily deluded. This is a question everyone really ought to think about.

The workers, peasants and soldiers have no direct contacts with counter-revolutionary revisionists. On top of this, these counter-revolutionary revisionists all fly the red flag to attack the red flag. They go under the colours of Central Committee directives. Yet again, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers as well as the cadres who are the mainstay of the Party and the League have strong proletarian emotions. Thus they were easily put upon; but once they reform that will be all right.

The lid has now been taken off the class struggle. The masses of workers and peasants have really been aimed with Marxist-Leninism; this is a powerful material force. The intellectuals have always been quicker on the uptake than the workers and peasants, and they are also rather more flexible and adaptable, but they often have a definite tendency to opportunism. If revolutionary intellectuals want to carry revolution through to the end they must continually reform themselves through labour. This is because the education that they, including the young students, have received over several decades is basically bourgeois; bourgeois thinking has blended into their bloodstream, and unless they make big efforts to change their world outlook things will start turning into their opposites. I still think that the great majority of intellectuals, whether inside or outside the Party, remain basically bourgeois. Please will you all consider whether or not this view is out of date. In this crucial moment of the class struggle we must stress the reform of our own world outlook.

2. The Great Strategic Disposition at Present is Achieving Great Alliances and Triple Combinations through Major Revolutionary Criticism.

The present Great Cultural Revolution will not end soon. It will develop even more deeply and on an even larger scale. The small handful of the biggest power-holders in the Party taking the capitalist road must be criticized with even more concentrated forces. We must make propaganda about the Eleventh Plenum; we must talk about our achievements and our line. If we are to overthrow the small handful of the biggest power-holders taking the capitalist road we must do so not only organizationally but also politically, ideologically, and in the realm of theory. This is a vital issue for the country and the world. If revisionism is not overthrown it will stage a restoration. This is a great historical task. Looking forward, it is very far indeed from being completed.

In this great struggle we must turn the spearhead towards the power-holders taking the capitalist road, towards revisionists. Some of these people have infiltrated the Party and usurped positions of leadership. They are the supporters and protectors of all the ghosts and monsters¹⁵. They are all ambitious scheming hypocrites from the exploiting classes. They pretend to comply when they are inwardly disobeying. They are two-faced and treacherous, talking like people to your face and like devils behind your back. They often use Marxist-Leninist phrases as their shop-signs while making a great commotion after a 'but'. Those who fly the red flag are even more dangerous. We must be very much on our guard against this.

Something of which I personally think we can see the first signs at present is giving up the struggle against the enemy, the struggle against the biggest power-holders in the Party who are taking the capitalist line. When I raised this question in the last discussion forum here I said that we ought to make a programme aimed at the biggest of the power-holders in the Party taking the capitalist road. At present this contradiction is not concentrated; it is widely dissipated. This means it is very hard to criticize the biggest of the power-holders inside the Party until they are utterly exposed.

In the cataclysmic changes that have developed over the past year there has naturally been chaos everywhere. There is no connection between the chaos in one place and that in another. Even violent struggle is very good, because once contradictions are exposed they are easily solved. The losses in this great cultural revolution have been minimal and the achievements huge.

The great advantage of the army supporting the left is that it makes the army itself get educated. They understand this question through actual struggles. In supporting the revolutionary masses and the left-wing organizations not only do they see the struggles between the two lines that exist in all aspects of society and the class struggle; they also see that the struggles between the two lines and class struggle exist in the army as well. When the army supports the left this problem is similarly exposed, with the result that the army is strengthened and the ideological level of our troops is raised.

We must not be afraid of rows. The bigger they are the better. With seven or eight rows things are bound to be sorted out properly and to some effect. No matter what sort of rows there are we must not be afraid of them, because the more afraid we are the more trouble there will be. But we must not shoot. It is bad to shoot at any time.

The whole country is involved in a big row. If you have a boil it contains germs and it is bound to burst. Opposing the thinking of the bourgeois academic authorities is a case in point—it amounts to smashing it. If it is not smashed, socialism cannot be established and struggle—criticism—reform is impossible.

If a cart is driven too fast it will overturn. You have to listen to those who greet you. The main things at present are great alliances and

triple combinations; digging out bad people, ghosts and monsters; and the revival of the Party organizations. In my opinion Party congresses at all levels, including the ninth national congress, can be called at about this time next year. You should not all be feeling tired or wanting to get out of things.

The obstacles to great alliances come at present from two sources: the power-holders in the Party taking the capitalist road on the one hand; and, on the other, mountain-top-ism,¹⁶ showing off, and unwillingness to form great alliances among the rebels. When revolutionary committees have been founded, petit-bourgeois revolutionaries need to be very well led. As for the Liberation Army, we need the slogan 'Support the Army and Cherish the People'¹⁷ If one looks at the very detailed reports on the problem of armed struggle that have come in from throughout the country, one can see that there has not been so much. There is some armed struggle, but some of the reports are unfounded—rather like reports of natural disaster intended to get extra relief grain. On the question of cadres, we must criticize 'attacking the many to protect the few', which is still happening throughout the country. Great alliances, triple combinations and supporting the left are immutably fixed principles. Seizing power, the army, and the cadres are the three big problems at present. Where power has already been seized, holding it is the current big problem. If these problems are grasped the main line of policy can be achieved; otherwise it will fail. We must also grasp major criticism, grasp things of substance. *Red Flag* has published an article of substance.¹⁸

At present we must carry major criticism to a new high tide, making it the central task taking priority over everything else. We should integrate criticism of the small handful of top power-holders in the Party taking the capitalist road with that of power-holders taking the capitalist road in our own localities and departments. The overall emphasis in papers and journals must be on Liu, Teng, T'ao, P'eng, Lo, Lu and Yang.¹⁹ In the army the emphasis of criticism is on Liu Shao-ch'i, P'eng Teh-huai, Ho Lung²⁰ and Lo Jui-ch'ing.

3. Revolutionary Rebels Must Work Hard at Remoulding their World View

In this crucial moment in the class struggle we must stress the remoulding of our own world view. Revolutionary leftists are under an even stronger obligation to eliminate the bourgeois and promote the proletarian. Otherwise bourgeois ideology will not be cleaned up for a long time and will even go towards the negative side of things. Don't you believe it? I would like to ask you all how, after all, we are to move from socialism to communism. Have you thought about this carefully? If we are to guarantee that the mistake of taking the capitalist road will never be repeated and if we really concern ourselves with the affairs of the nation, we must work hard at remoulding our world view.

It looks as though two preconditions are essential for a great alliance. One is that only an alliance created through struggle can be strong, because struggle is absolute while unity is relative. Some say that the

Chinese people are passionately fond of peace. I don't think they are so fond of it. The Chinese people are pugnacious.

'Revolution is no crime, rebellion is justified'²¹ should not be wildly applied at present. Revolution and protecting both have the strongest class nature. Revolutionary cadres must be protected, and protected with full justification and boldness. It is better to be left than rightist. Apparent 'leftism' that is really rightism looks even more revolutionary on the outside than does being realistic, but we do not advocate it. It is in the bourgeois domain, it is clique-ish.

Distinguished and influential figures of the May 4th period included then leftists like Hu Shih,²² who later became a running-dog of us imperialism. Ch'en Tu-hsiu,²³ who was famous in the May 4th movement, became a counter-revolutionary. Li Ta-chao²⁴ did not write many articles at the time, but he devoted himself to his work and became a revolutionary leftist. Then there was Lu Hsiün,²⁵ who stressed social investigation and independent thought at that time and later became a great Marxist. We learn from history. We should not be flashes in the pan. We should work hard, be good at thinking, and have close links with the masses. We must be good at putting the petit-bourgeois thinking in our ranks back on the proletarian revolutionary track. This is a key problem in winning victory in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

4. China Must Become the Arsenal for the World Revolution

Modern weapons, guided missiles and atom bombs were made very quickly, and we produced a hydrogen bomb in only two years and eight months. Our development has been faster than that of America, Britain and France. We are now in fourth place in the world. Guided missiles and atom bombs are great achievements. This is the result of Khrushchev's 'help'. By withdrawing the experts he forced us to take our own road. We should give him a big medal.

us imperialism is even more isolated. All the peoples of the world know that us imperialism is the chief cause of war. The peoples of the whole world, even the American people, are against it. Soviet revisionism has been further exposed particularly in this Middle East affair. The Soviet revisionists used Khrushchev's tricks again. They sent over 2,000 military experts to the UAR. First they went in for adventurism and sent warships in. Then they persuaded the UAR not to be the first to attack, and at the same time told Johnson on the hot line—there was no hot line in Khrushchev's day. Johnson lost no time in telling Israel to launch a surprise attack. Sixty per cent of the UAR's aircraft were destroyed on the ground. Soviet aid to the UAR amounted to 2,300,000,000,²⁶ but in the end the UAR surrendered and stopped fighting. This is another big exposure of how the nationalist states are betrayed.

A lot of places are anti-China at the moment, which makes it look as though we are isolated. In fact they are anti-China because they are afraid of the influence of China, of the thought of Mao Tse-tung, and of the Great Cultural Revolution. They oppose China in order to keep the

people in their own countries down and to divert popular dissatisfaction with their rule. This opposition to China is jointly planned by us imperialism and Soviet revisionism. This shows not that we are isolated, but that our influence throughout the world has greatly increased. The more they oppose China to more they spur on popular revolution; the people of these countries realise that the Chinese road is the only one to liberation. China should not only be the political centre of the world revolution. It must also become the military and technical centre of the world revolution. We must give them weapons. We can now do so openly: that is, except in some special regions, we can give them inscribed Chinese weapons. We must support them openly and become the arsenal of the world revolution.

Translator's Note

The above purports to be a talk given by Mao Tse-tung. It is translated from an undated article in a Kwangtung unofficial newspaper. While its authenticity cannot be vouched for (and even if basically genuine it may have been tampered with), it shows in my opinion both a general attitude to political life and a number of splendid individual touches that are pure Mao Tse-tung and rather beyond a forger's imagination or nerve. However, as it is only a report of a talk, not an article written by Mao himself, it would not be right to take it as a definitive, organized statement of his views even if we accept its authenticity. Perhaps it is best regarded as Mao thinking aloud, rather than presenting final conclusions, and in some ways it is all the more instructive and valuable for that reason.

On internal evidence the talk would seem to date from about July 1967. Since then the movement has moved into a stage of renewed emphasis on order and conformity as State and Party structure are recreated. This was marked by the recent extensive republication of the report Mao made to the Central Committee in spring 1949, when the main problems facing revolution as the end of the Liberation War drew into sight were those of reconstruction and restoring stability on a new basis while continuing class struggles in generally more peaceful forms. Especially worthy of attention are Mao's views on the intellectuals and on the value of struggle; also his broad and unbarriered strategic approach.

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Footnotes

¹ Great alliances were to be formed among the various revolutionary mass organizations to create provisional new ruling bodies, in which those former leading cadres still thought revolutionary and representatives of the army were also to take part, thus forming triple combinations.

Since 1966 a member of the CPC Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Group. In November 1965 his article strongly attacking Wu Han's play *The Dismissal of Hai Jui* was published in the Shanghai press.

² Before 1966 a powerful Politbureau member, Mayor of Peking, and First Secretary of the Peking Municipal Party Committee. As he was in charge of the group of five that ran the Cultural Revolution until February 1966, he was held responsible for early attempts to keep it within 'safe' limits and therefore overthrown.

- ⁴ This 1966 Notice in the name of the Central Committee rejected the policy of P'eng Chen's group of five and announced the formation of a new Cultural Revolution group (see *Peking Review* May 19th 1967).
- ⁵ This enlarged meeting of the CC (July-August 1966) approved Mao's line on the Cultural Revolution and issued the programmatic 16-point directive on its conduct.
- ⁶ Long-established head of the Party and State machine in the huge province of Szechuan and the rest of the South-West. He was one of the last of the big local opponents of the Cultural Revolution to be toppled.
- ⁷ First Secretary of the North-West Bureau of the CC and key man in Shensi province and the rest of the North-West until the Cultural Revolution.
- ⁸ Probably referring to the September 1965 one in which Mao called for struggle against revisionism in China and the Party.
- ⁹ The rising of rebel groups in Shanghai in early January 1966 that sparked off the movement to seize power from existing authorities throughout the country.
- ¹⁰ The rising of rebel groups in Shanghai in early January 1966 that sparked off the movement to seize power from existing authorities throughout the country.
- ¹¹ A multitude of sins, mainly connected with excessive use of material incentives.
- ¹² A student demonstration in Peking on May 4th 1919 and the nationwide strikes of students, workers and merchants marked both the entry of radical intellectuals into political struggle and the beginning of the mass revolutionary movement that reached climax and disaster in 1927.
- ¹³ In 1926 and early 1927 the armies of the Kuomintang, then still in alliance with the Communists, swept through much of central China under the slogans of 'down with imperialism' and 'down with warlords'. Massive support from organized workers and peasants was of vital importance.
- ¹⁴ A member of the CC Cultural Revolution Group until his fall in 1968 as an extreme leftist. 'Patriotism or National Betrayal', an article published in March 1967 ostensibly attacking a historical film, was the first nationally and internationally publicized criticism of 'the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road' (as Liu Shao-ch'i was called until the official ban on referring to him directly was lifted last autumn).
- ¹⁵ A full-scale attack on Liu Shao-ch'i's *How to Be a Good Communist* (literally, *The Self-Cultivation of a Member of the Communist Party*) published by *Red Flag* and the *People's Daily* in May 1967.
- ¹⁶ Top bourgeois and feudal intellectuals.
- ¹⁷ The exclusivist, small-group attitudes that tend to develop in independent guerilla units.
- ¹⁸ I.e. the people support the army and the army cherishes the people. This slogan was given wide publicity in the middle of 1967 and has frequently been revived since.
- ¹⁹ Not clear which article is meant.
- ²⁰ Liu Shao-ch'i; Teng Shiao-p'ing (in charge of the Party machine); T'ao Chu (Party boss in Kwangtung province and South-Central region who succeeded Lu Ting-yi as head of CC propaganda bureau in July 1966 and fell at the end of that year); P'eng Chen or P'eng Te-hual (minister of defence and chief proponent of regularized, Soviet-style army until dismissal in 1959); Lo Jui-ch'ing (head of security); Lu Ting-yi (head of CC propaganda bureau, minister of culture); Yang Shang-k'un (high in Party machine, allegedly involved with Lo Jui-ch'ing in attempted quiet coup early in 1966).
- ²¹ Veteran soldier and sports chief allegedly involved in direct opposition to Mao.
- ²² Slogan prevalent late 1966-early 1967 to justify overthrow of anybody.
- ²³ (1894-1962) American-educated intellectual who moved from earlier rebelliousness to independent right-wing position. Although at times Chinese ambassador to USA, was all his life a representative of US values to China.
- ²⁴ (1879-1942) Leader of the new culture movement before May 4th who was founder member of CPC and its first leader. Scapegoat for failure to prevent disasters of 1927. Ended up a Trotskyist.
- ²⁵ With Ch'en an intellectual and then a CP leader. Arrested and murdered in 1927. As librarian in Peking University he gave Mao a job and influenced him.
- ²⁶ (1881-1936) His reputation as the greatest Chinese writer of this century rests on a few stories and nearly twenty years of short, biting essays that stripped off the cultured masks of the ruling classes and their ideology and showed deep sympathy for their victims and opponents. His stubbornly independent revolutionary position annoyed some communists but has long appealed to Mao.
- ²⁷ Unit of currency not given.

The School Movement in Rome

Chiara Ingrao

On the third of December 1968, forty thousand school students marched through the streets of Rome. While they went up Via Nazionale, one of the main streets of the city, the bourgeois ladies out shopping and the clerks in the offices above stared at them apprehensively.

Children out walking when they should be at school was something familiar, which had never worried anybody. But this time it was different. The 'children' were many, and they felt neither guilty nor naughty for what they were doing. Whereas normally they would have avoided meeting their teachers on such a day, this time they seemed not to fear anybody. They seemed suddenly to have discovered that it is possible *not* to obey your teacher, *not* to think what they tell you to think, *not* to accept all the violence and repression hidden behind the word 'discipline'. And they used a big word for all this: 'general strike'.

A general strike, be it of school kids or of industrial workers, doesn't just happen from day to night. It needs days and days of patient work, discussions, meetings, leaflets, individual strikes, etc, to make it happen. It can't be decided from above unless there is real agitation and feeling for it at the base.

In Rome, the first agitation in schools had started around March last year, when the student movement in the Universities was at its height. At that time, a small number of school students used to attend the meetings and demonstrations held by their older colleagues, and tried to start something similar in their schools. It was only with the new academic year, though, that University students themselves decided to work hard on the schools question, contacting people in every school, using all possible channels—leaflets, personal friends and relatives, political connections of all sorts (Party branches, left-wing Catholics, Maoist or Trotskyist groups, etc.) Day by day, we would work with these small groups of students (often not more than four or five in each school, and not always political people), trying to give them sug-

gestions about possible action in the school and at the same time to stimulate their political consciousness. Action developed very fast, maybe with better results than we had expected, often ending up in one-day or two-day strikes in individual schools. Finally, one afternoon, a large assembly of technical and professional students decided that the time had come for a big united strike; after two days, trainee teachers and grammar school students joined in and the general strike was proclaimed.

That technical students should be the first ones to call for a general strike did not surprise us. They had been the most militant ones right from the beginning.

Technical and professional training, in Italy, takes place at school and not, as in England, at college level. The only type of further education which exists is university education, which is only open to grammar school students. Therefore, the students who choose technical, professional, or teacher training schools (and the choice takes place at the age of 14) are usually those who cannot afford to go to University and who wish to obtain a qualification (a school diploma) after a relatively short time. Their 'class consciousness' is thus much stronger than that of other school kids. They are the children of the exploited working class, and know that they are soon going to be exploited themselves; that their diploma, which cost long years of hard work, will be worth little more than nothing once they start looking for a job. These students are, objectively, the most discriminated against, and they feel it. Thus, it was relatively easy for us to articulate their discontent in Marxist terms and explain to them that the discrimination was a class discrimination, that they themselves were being used as tiny components in a big machine called capitalism. Once this new approach was accepted by them, their deep dissatisfaction with the school system exploded with great violence, and 'Down With The Class School' became one of their favourite slogans.

With the students in the *Licei* (grammar schools), the problems were slightly different. These students are not faced with urgent material problems (such as the question of the diploma), and it is therefore much more difficult to get them involved in a mass action. While technical and professional students were up against the structures of the school (examination system, excess of school hours every day, discrimination), the students in grammar schools were much more easily touched by somewhat vague 'anti-authoritarian' issues. And although their leaders (because of their cultural background) often had a very high level of political understanding, they very seldom succeeded in carrying the mass of their schoolfellows along with them. Some of us used to say jokingly that a few grammar school students might consider themselves to be 'the vanguard intellectuals', but that it certainly seemed that the 'revolutionary masses' were to be found elsewhere. Yet, despite all the diffidence which comrades from technical schools tend to show towards these 'children of the bourgeoisie', it must be recognized that they were the ones who started the movement, and who were most ready to take up the political issues raised by the student movement last year. They were the first ones to bring up the question of free

assemblies in the schools—which was to become one of the main issues in the general strike.

The demand for open assemblies in the school had already been put forward by vast numbers of students (with varying responses from their headmasters) when the Minister of Education, Scaglia, decided it was time for him to give *his* opinion.

What he offered was:

- A Delegate Assembly*, open only to one or two representatives from each class,
- No Admission* to people outside the school,
- A Strict Control* by the teachers and headmaster, who were to be present at every assembly and to decide whether the assembly should or should not take place.

This offer enraged the students. The assembly *they* wanted was something quite different. That was:

- A General Assembly*, of all the students in the school,
- An Open Assembly*, open to students from other schools, universities, etc, as well as to workers, intellectuals, people living nearby, etc.
- A Free Assembly*, without any control by the teachers and headmaster.

Only thus, they claimed, the assembly would become a real instrument of democratic power and of political development for all students.

The refusal of a delegate assembly in favour of a free, general one can indeed be considered an important step forward in the students' political consciousness. In simple terms, it means refusal of parliamentary democracy in favour of soviet democracy. It is therefore very important that the school students should fight for it, and it is our duty to encourage this fight and to provide all possible help to those who are involved in it. On the other hand, though, we must always bear in mind that the assembly, as all other forms of democratic power, is only an *instrument*—it would be a great mistake to fight for it as if it were an *end in itself*. Our experience in Rome has taught us many things with regard to this problem. We found that those schools which concentrated on the question of the assembly-democracy often, once they obtained their assembly, didn't know what to do with it, and would end up talking about lavatories which didn't work, unpleasant teachers, etc. In other schools, where the headmaster would not, *at any cost*, let the students hold their assembly, the fight was indeed more militant and longer—but there was often a great gap between the degree of militancy of the students involved and their corresponding political development. They knew that they wanted democracy and that the headmaster was against it, but they were forced to concentrate on this issue so much that they would forget the general questions of school structure, class discrimination, class culture, etc. And in the long run, the lack of clarity about their general aims tended to affect the students *also in their militancy*.

In the Italian situation (and I am sure the English one is not so different), the most militant students are also the ones who are most subject to all sorts of pressures and repressive measures by their teachers, headmasters, families, etc. I have seen dozens of examples of this: children forced into school by their parents, when they wanted to take part in the strike; teachers giving bad marks merely on political grounds; long talks between headmasters and families about the 'problem child'; girls locked up in their rooms (one of them used to jump out of the window to come to our meetings, even though she knew that her father would beat her as soon as she got back home). Sometimes the violence is not open and *physical*, but instead all kinds of emotional, psychological or moral blackmail and brainwashing are introduced—and these are even harder to resist. The amount of energy that is needed to stand all this is very great; and energy in itself will never be enough, if at the same time one does not have enough political consciousness to know what one is really fighting for, and why the reaction of the 'authorities' is so strong.

Therefore, both in those situations where an assembly was conceded and in those where it was not, we realized that the fight for 'democratic demands' would only be successful if it were led by a politicized vanguard, able to put the problems in a wider political perspective. This vanguard, though, could not be represented by a relatively 'external' force, such as ourselves. However informed we might be about the particular problems of each school, it was impossible for us (being University students) to fight *inside* the school, *day by day*, and thus establish a correct relationship with the mass of the students. Therefore, once we had established a certain number of contacts, in the various ways I have described, we would concentrate our efforts on trying to establish strong BASE-GROUPS inside each school, leaving the power to take decisions entirely to them and to their connecting organs (e.g. local assemblies of the base-groups).

We particularly insisted on the fact that the base-group should always *work on a collective basis, should not take major decisions without consulting the assembly*, and should be *open to all students who wished to work hard within it*. The schools which had a strong base-group working on this basis, in fact, were the only ones able to resist the general wave of repression which was to follow the strike. This was particularly true in those schools where we had most insisted that the base-group should never be 'contented just with making propaganda work and finding good issues for struggle; where we had most insisted that it should always *keep the general issues clearly in mind, and continually develop its analysis of the society at large and of the connection between school and society*. At the same time, we had also insisted that the ideological work done within the group should always be *communicated to the mass of the students—in the simplest possible terms*, because only thus the political advance of the group itself would be matched by a development in the political consciousness of all students.

The first work to be done in this sense was in pointing out the connection between school structures and society, and the way in which

the content of education is determined by the ruling class. We especially stressed four points:

1. *What we learn in school is detached from what we are, what we do, what our social situation is.* But while the upper class kid doesn't mind this very much, because he can afford to 'cultivate his mind' regardless of the reality he lives in, the working class kid cannot avoid bumping into his social reality everyday, whether he wants it or not. Thus, it is much more difficult for him to accept an abstract culture, which is forced upon him from above, and which does not have any relationship to his life.

2. *The culture we learn at school is the culture of the ruling class.* The peasants and workers have never been given the time, the money, the instruments which would allow them to produce culture. Once again, the children of the working class are thus forced to give up the ideas, the language, the approach to life which they learnt in their family and to absorb those of the ruling class. Very often, they don't succeed in this. When they do, the constant violence they have done to themselves has completely transformed them into passive instruments in the hands of the ruling class.

3. *There is no neutral culture, no neutral science, no neutral history, literature, etc.* The history we learn in school is the history of the privileged and not that of the masses, the literature we learn is based upon the ideology of the ruling class, the science we learn is only used as a powerful weapon to exploit the working class, not to mention its use for napalm, atom bombs, etc.

4. *The greatest virtues which we are taught at school are individualism and personal ambition.* We are encouraged to study in order to improve *our own* culture, knowledge, etc. All the praise is given to those who have managed to be 'top' in their class, regardless of their relationship to the other pupils, of the way they communicate and use their 'knowledge'. Papers, tests, examinations, are all based on a 'confrontation' between the individual pupil and the things he is supposed to have learnt. Thus everyone is striving to get along on his own, always feeling too young, too small, too isolated to be able to change anything in the existing state of things. This, on a small scale, reflects what happens to isolated individuals in a capitalist society.

Most students, as we found, were particularly sensitive to this last issue, because it brought up their 'existential' problems in quite a direct way. At the beginning, though, many of them would object to seeing their individual problems being put in more or less crude political terms: they felt that this somehow 'deprived' them of their individuality. But things would change very much as the work of the base-group developed. People slowly discovered that, far from being deprived, their individual personalities gained in freedom and potential richness by this new approach, by this new kind of collective work. As one of them said, 'I learnt that other people's problems are the same as mine. To solve them all together is politics. To solve them individually is avarice'.

Introduction

J. H.

The article on the Greek Communist Party which follows first appeared in Literární Listy, the Czechoslovak weekly. It is of interest on three counts. First, it was published in Czechoslovakia during the summer of 1968. Second, it attempts to tackle historically the problem of the relationship between the left inside Greece and the exile groups which were once the leadership of the domestic movement (this is a problem common to all the three southern European countries under overt fascist régimes—Greece, Spain and Portugal—and, to a lesser extent, to West Germany). The split which surfaced among the exile groups in February 1968 was only a delayed reaction to a real movement which had been long going on subterraneously inside Greece itself. Thirdly, it evokes the rural preponderance in the Greek movement, as a historical fact. This, of course, sets the Greek movement apart from the only other movement in southern Europe which has engaged in anything like a similar struggle—the Spanish left in the late thirties—which had a powerful urban base. The two European movements which have waged successful guerrilla struggles, the Albanian and Yugoslav partisans, both based themselves on rural areas—but in specific conditions, those of a struggle against an alien occupying force in a situation of generalized warfare. At the time when the Greek left was first forming, Greece was a predominantly rural society, as evidenced by the fact that Greek cadres were trained in the Moscow University of the East, along with revolutionaries from Asia. The society is now much more highly urbanized, and much of the subsequent political radicalization has occurred in precisely these new urban areas. It is obvious that there is a significant political contradiction here.

Two further questions need comment: the role of Yugoslavia and the question of armed struggle. It was not Russian policy vis-à-vis Greece that changed in 1948, but that of Yugoslavia. Russian policy had, in fact, been laid down by the October 1944 deal between Churchill and Stalin, which allocated Greece to the Western sphere of influence. The wartime revolutionary tradition of Yugoslavia, however, at first led that country to give active support to the armed struggle in Greece after 1945. But after the break with the Cominform this tradition soon petered out, and the Yugoslav government adopted a consistently reactionary position (Balkan Pact, supply of electricity to the Athens régime to circumvent effects of a general strike). Secondly, it is evident that Yannakakis's comments on the historical role of armed struggle in Greece are incorrect, and will not be shared by the majority of Greek militants today. We hope to pursue analysis of the Greek situation with a further article on the military régime in a forthcoming issue.

The Greek Communist Party

Ilios Yannakakis

At the 12th plenary session of its Central Committee, which met between the 3rd and 12th February 1968, the Greek Communist Party split. A captive of its myths, transplanted into a foreign environment, institutionalized in the framework of a dubious legality, cut off from the political and social life of its own country, the Greek Communist Party had traditionally assimilated into its own work the deformed practices of the Eastern European countries. The split, which has occurred at a time when the entire Greek Left is engaged in working out a common programme adapted to the special conditions of the struggle against the dictatorship, was doubtless inevitable. It is itself a positive phenomenon because for Greek Communists abroad it is the beginning of an acknowledgment of reality, and for Communists at home of spiritual liberation. But above all it is the end of a myth.

Since 1949 the Greek Communist Party has been based abroad, following the collapse of the Democratic Army when thousands of Greeks left the country. The 'Romiosini', (Democratic Army) dispersed through all the peoples' democracies and the Soviet Union, turned inwards upon itself *politically* and from that moment on regarded its very existence alone as a political act. Unlike Greeks living in other parts of the world, its members refused to establish links with local life but lived closed in within the environment of the Greek Party which was underpinned by a *legal* party organization, resting on the firm basis of devoted cadres who automatically approved every party decision. The party thus established for itself a position of unassailable power, and on the basis of this make-believe power and an artificially created reality carried out its policy.

An examination of the background to the errors of the Greek Communist Party is important not only for an understanding of the disruptive process within the party, of the February 1968 split, and its 'foreign' and 'domestic' problems, but also because it sheds light on one of the principal aspects of the crisis now shaking the Greek CP and the entire Greek left.

The Mountains and the Towns

During the German occupation, the Greek Communist party played an outstanding role in organizing the resistance movement. Under its leadership ELAS and EAM came into existence. Most of the underground network was directed by Communists and, because over half of the territory of Greece was under the control of ELAS, in the liberated areas power rested for all practical purposes in the hands of the Communist Party. Thus the inhabitants of poor and backward mountainous regions, who until then had lived in conditions of medieval oppression, overnight found themselves masters of their own fate. Intensive recruitment of new members rapidly changed the composition of the party. From below upwards the worker and intellectual

element gradually disappeared, and a system of village committees, self-management bodies and various formations of civilian defence organizations set up in the liberated areas enabled thousands of party members of peasant origin to wield institutionalized power and receive schooling in an atmosphere in which the cult of the party reached its peak. In this period there was born a whole style of work and arose a new mentality; in conditions under which law was wholly subordinated to the party, or rather was wholly in the service of the party, the new members and officials regarded every manifestation of a critical or creative spirit as treachery. This was a kind of a prototype of the mentality which in the ensuing years was to be predominant in the party. It was in this period, too, that the myth of the infallibility of the party leadership was born. Its peasant basis became the fertile soil in which complacency and intolerance flourished.

The towns, which were occupied by the Germans, and which called for a style of work completely different from that illegal activity, remained untouched by the 'spirit of the mountains'. The party organization there was confronted by an entirely different situation: differences of opinion, the activity of the non-Communist network, the broad spectrum of political parties and organizations associated within EAM, required from the Communists the highest degree of adaptability to political reality. The first signs of the conflict between 'towns' and 'mountains', between two concepts of power began to appear: the first took into consideration the plurality of political life, while the second was based on the principle of relentless armed struggle under any conditions whatever. This second conception had its origin in the extraordinary situation that existed in the mountains in the period of the occupation and in which the Communist party held a political monopoly. This conception, which was turned into a dogma—later modified for psychological and ideological reasons—lost all tactical virtue and in the end became the well which fed the self-delusion of officials and members of the party who imagined that they disposed of unlimited power *under any circumstances*. The 'mountain spirit' which at one time had developed naturally in Greece, only later on became symptomatic for the 'foreign' section of the party. It should be emphasized that the differences between the 'towns' and 'mountains' were at that time hardly perceptible at first glance.

Although it had the support of the great majority of the population, and although it possessed an armed force (ELAS) which in 1944 governed almost three quarters of Greek territory, the leadership of the Greek Communist Party signed an agreement with the Greek exile government (the Lebanese agreement), opening the door to a series of compromises with the rightist forces which led to the whole fateful development of post-war politics in Greece. The armed struggle between units of the ELAS and British forces in Athens in December 1944, the capitulation of ELAS and the signing of the Varkis agreement at the beginning of 1945 put an end to the efforts of the Greek Communist Party: the power which was almost within its grasp eluded it. Instead of drawing conclusions from these defeats and trying to find the most effective method to engage in post-war political life as an opposition party and continue the fight at parliamentary level (to have done so

would have given Greek developments an entirely different trend and saved the country from almost 15 years of fascism) the party leadership prepared for further armed struggle. The period between 1945 and 1947 was also marked by a feeling of frustration in the ranks of the party at all levels. This was especially so among the peasantry. The legends about ELAS, the return from the detention camp of the party's general secretary, N. Zachariades, and the atmosphere of terror created by the monarcho-fascist persecutions generated a spirit of revenge which made it impossible to attempt a sober analysis of the political situation. This period also witnessed the emergence of the 'spirit of the exiles' which was to replace the 'spirit of the mountains'. The myth of the power of the Greek CP, especially strong among the peasants and the mountain dwellers, grew to unprecedented proportions.

The Secret of Bulkes

The history of how the Greek CP became established abroad is practically unknown to Greek Communists, and most of them date it from the year 1949 when the civil war finished. In fact the first groups of Greek party leaders left Greece as early as February and March of 1945. Most of them were former members of ELAS and of commando squads which the party had organized in the towns during the occupation and who, because of their previous activities, were being persecuted and had to leave the country. The Yugoslav government put the village of Bulkes in the Voivodina at the disposal of the Greek CP (this fertile area had previously been inhabited by Germans who were expelled after the war). Bulkes and its environs became 'Greek' territory over which the Greek Communist Party exercised power. It was a State within a State, with its own administration, bureaucracy, public and social services (schools, medical care, and canteens), economy and finance (Bulkes currency was valid only within the enclave). Bulkes was a kind of miniature version of a socialist régime with all the contemporary deformations. There was only one law—the will of the party. A peculiar situation: no-one asked questions in this village, the para-military discipline precluded any breath of democracy, the only source of information was the newspapers issued by the party, the cult of the party leaders knew no bounds, and the word of the leader (the *archira*)—in this instance Zachariades—was sacrosanct. This is how Bulkes became the school for party leaders. The importance of the enclave grew markedly after 1946 when, as a result of the widespread persecution of the party by the monarcho-fascist government in Greece, the population of Bulkes sharply increased. Thousands of Greeks, mostly from the mountainous part of northern Greece, left for Bulkes at the orders of the party. Bulkes also served as a rear base for the Democratic Army in the 1946–49 civil war, ensured supplies and maintained the fighting strength of the units whose ranks were sharply depleted after every battle. (It should be remembered that the slogan of the nation-wide armed struggle against monarcho-fascism was first issued by Zachariades in 1947, when all the towns were already in the hands of the authorities, when thousands of the best party workers were in prison or in concentration camps, and when there no longer existed any practical possibility of going into the

mountains and joining the partisan units. The Democratic Army, deprived of its popular reserves, could now rely only on the mountain population.)

Bulkes served at the same time as a testing ground for unlawful trials and despotism against anyone who to some degree or other contested some of the party decisions. (The Bulkes methods were applied during 1949-56, with only minor modifications, in all the organizations of the Greek CP in the East European countries). The party trained its own secret police recruited from the most reliable and fanatical cadres, whose task was to weed out the 'dissatisfied'. In this atmosphere of distrust and 'vigilance' it was not difficult to 'expose the enemies of the party'. Usually the suspect was summoned before a party committee where it was suggested that he should in all secrecy leave for the mountains, that is to say, join the Democratic Army. Instead of being taken to the Greek-Yugoslav border, he found he was being taken to an island in the middle of the river Danube named 'Festival', where interrogations and executions were carried out. Not until the sixth plenary meeting of the Greek CP's central committee in 1956 did several persons who survived their experiences on 'Festival' come forward to give evidence. There is no need to record the long list of all the other forms of sanctions that were used.

The very low cultural level of the peasant population, the unconditional devotion and political fanaticism, the complete lack of information and the strict, conspiratorial regulations, the air of imminent victory and the real heroism, a certain sense of security (for the peasants who in Greece had lived in the worst poverty, Bulkes was paradise on earth), the memory of the battles of Vitsi and Gramos, the complete isolation (only a handful of selected cadres were allowed beyond the borders of the enclave), together with a wide range of psychological pressures—all these are the factors making up the background against which the political mentality of the Greek party leadership developed.

Fact and Fiction

The party, stripped of power in its homeland, felt itself to be wielding unlimited and uncontrolled power which, however, was in fact fictitious because it was effective only on foreign territory. It was the tragedy of the party that throughout the twenty long years of its exile it did not find the strength to turn away from this warped, but also flattering and calm-inducing mirror.

After the defeat of the democratic army in September 1949, thousands of Greeks left for the countries of Eastern Europe, where several thousand Greek children were already living. The geographical pattern according to which these people were dispersed perfectly illustrates the kind of mentality prevailing in the party. The majority of those members of the fighting units who were considered 'reliable' were sent to Tashkent in the USSR, while those who belonged to the units which the monarcho-fascist armies had driven to the Yugoslav border were sent to Czechoslovakia and Hungary to be 'decontaminated' (a great number of partisans belonging to these units were expelled from the party

for 'revisionism'). Women and children were dispersed haphazardly. The party centre was based in Rumania, where the top party leaders were also living. The emigrés could be roughly divided into three groups: the reliable (party members); non-party elements; and those earmarked for re-education (a few intellectuals who had reached Eastern Europe by devious routes and not directly from the fighting zone). This method of classification was also reflected in the manner personal files were compiled and sent to the local party organs.

The defeat of 1949 did not undermine the prestige of the party; if anything, the authority of its leadership was strengthened. The myth of its infallibility grew more powerful. To understand this, two important factors should be borne in mind.

1. The overwhelming majority of party members and lower and higher party workers had entered the political arena for the first time during the occupation, and thus knew no other form of struggle but armed struggle. The political fight was for them a practically unknown concept; economic and social questions, for the study of which a certain level of education and knowledge was required, were explained to them primitively and dogmatically, and even the concept of the proletariat was something abstract to them since their view of Greece had been delimited by the borders of their villages. Undergoing training to become the future administrators of a free Greece, they lost all sense of reality, and out of the great myth of the party they created many lesser myths.

2. The political structure of the East European countries and the Stalinist methods of direction prevalent there perfectly suited the mentality of the party leaders and the party's style of work. None of those who, during five years of armed struggle, had wielded unlimited and uncontrolled power and had become used to accepting submission and adulation, lost any of their privileges following the tragic defeat; in fact their power became still greater and in the end received the seal of authority. The mass of the exiles, the refugees, who could speak only their native dialect, were overwhelmed by their feeling of loneliness in a foreign country; incapable of securing a livelihood, uprooted, regimented and easily dominated, they looked to the party as their saviour—a kind of '*deus ex machina*' in every difficult situation. They laid all their problems before the party, which was to them the ultimate authority, the highest justice. In such an atmosphere of byzantinism there was no room for the concrete realities of Greece.

The period 1949-55 was marked by an inner-party witch-hunt. At all party levels the guilty had to be found, in all leading party bodies the class enemy had to be exposed. Old party leaders who had remained in Greece were expelled from the party by way of broadcasts over the free Greek radio (the most characteristic case was that of Siantos, the late party secretary who has since died). A number of prominent party leaders who were working underground or were in prison were denounced as traitors (Rlunidis). In the East European countries it was even more tragic: dozens of Communists went to prison, some were executed or tortured with the silent consent of the authorities of the

countries concerned (among them Karageorgis, the former chief editor of 'Risopastis'), hundreds of Communists, confined to utterly isolated and tumble-down hamlets, endured years of exile with exile.

It was natural that in this tragically dual situation in which the Greek CP found itself in the countries of Eastern Europe, in this simultaneously legal and illegal position, Stalinism was able to spread unchecked and above all to determine the political line of the party.

It must be stressed, however, that the governments of the Eastern European countries contributed considerable resources and extensive aid to the thousands of refugees (housing, work, re-union of families, medical care, pensions for the old, tuition in Greek as well as the local language for all children, and so on). For thousands of Greeks who had come from a village environment, life in exile also meant a social improvement.

At Home and Abroad: the Split

At the sixth plenary meeting of the central committee of the Greek CP which was convened after the 20th congress of the CPSU, Zachariades, Vlandas and other leading members were dropped. Former members of the central committee (Partsalides, Vafiades and others) were restored to their previous position. The sixth plenum thus accepted the general line of de-stalinization and gave rise to hopes that a change of attitude would take place, especially as regards the 'home' leadership. However, the de-stalinization of the Greek party, like that of all other parties in Eastern Europe, did not go beyond certain limits laid down by the leadership, and it changed the line of the party even less as far as a direction from abroad was concerned.

The situation in the Greek party organizations abroad was dominated by sterile factional battles. From Tashkent to Prague, from Warsaw to Sofia, from Budapest to Bucharest, in all the towns and villages where there was a party organization, endless reciprocal expulsions took place between the supporters of Zachariades—the dogmatists, of Marko Vafiades—the revisionists, and the supporters of the 'correct' line, to use the then-current terminology. This ideological battle lasted almost two years before things began to settle down.

In the Greek homeland a democratic revival of society began after 1958. EDA became the dominant party of the Left and it was an open secret that the Greek Communists were members of it and formed most of its leading cadres. The interference of the Greek CP, the factionalism which it encouraged inside the organisations of the Left, the party's ignorance of Greek internal problems, its stubborn contention that EDA was its *alter ego* and the consequent introduction of its own mentality and methods into a body which was basically foreign to the party—all these are in themselves chapters of a story which only those who lived through these experiences at home in Greece are qualified to write. However, it would not be untimely to make a courageous

Marxist analysis of the Greek Communist Party's measure of responsibility for the errors committed by the Greek Left in the period prior to the take-over by the military Junta. Such an analysis of the errors of the Greek party, as seen through the eyes of those at home, would help to end the myth of the (fictitious) power of the party and would open the way to a movement for change within its ranks.

But to return to the party abroad. At the beginning of 1967 the first divisions revealed themselves, bringing some members of the Political Bureau into opposition to Koliyannis, the general secretary. However, there was still no mention of the need to recognize the pre-eminence of that section of the party which was active at home. Rather it was a question of what line to adopt in the pre-election period. The party was hypnotized by the prospect of the elections and discussion in the branches centred on the percentages of votes that might be obtained.

The Junta take-over put a stop to all pre-election speculation. Overnight Greece found herself again under a fascist dictatorship. The Greek Communists expected that a profound analysis would be made of the errors of the party leadership, but the decisions of the Central Committee satisfied nobody. On the other hand, the party organizations knew nothing at all about the discussions that had been going on at the party summit. Articles in the paper 'Neos Kosmos' and announcements by the leadership indicated the necessity to look for the 'guilty men' responsible for the defeat. A new witch-hunt was in the making. The July meeting of the Political Bureau criticized Partsalides for his relations with the representatives of the domestic Greek opposition parties. It became apparent that several members of the Political Bureau were about to be dropped. Koliyannis asked that the Central Committee be convened immediately to go into the question of responsibility for the defeat and he himself prepared the dossiers. The Political Bureau met again at the end of November and the beginning of December to examine the material and decide whether it should be submitted to the Central Committee meeting. From this material it became obvious that Political Bureau members Partsalides, Dimitriu and Zographos were to be made responsible for the 'intolerable situation in the party'. Upon this, these three comrades opposed the calling of the Central Committee unless those CC members who worked in Greece were also invited. As usual, these discussions went on without the knowledge of the mass of the party membership, who firmly believed that the leadership was solidly united. The plenum of the Central Committee met in February and by 12 votes to 9 decided to remove the three members from the Political Bureau. Out of the 26 members of the Political Bureau 21 lived outside Greece! Two days later the plenum met again, this time together with the members and candidate members of the Control Commission. The vote was 19 to 19. Partsalides, Dimitriu and Zographos now decided that together with their supporters they would set up the so-called United Central Committee. In this way the Greek Communists split into two sections. A new factional battle flared up in the party organizations similar to that of 1956: on one side those who backed Koliyannis, and on the other the supporters of Partsalides. On February 22nd, 22 prominent Greek Communists sent a letter from the prison of Aigina to the leadership of the party. In

this they wrote among other things: 'We have learnt with astonishment that a split has occurred in the foreign section of the party and that this split has even led to the removal of several members from the political bureau of the central committee. This news fills us with pain and indignation . . . The Greek Communists do not intend to tolerate such a situation. We appreciate your heroic past and your capabilities but the sense of responsibility of which we are conscious in the present tragic situation compels us to tell you clearly: Comrades, for 20 years now you have been living far from our homeland, assuredly through no fault of your own but because of the intolerance and sterile anti-Communism which has brought our country to its present unhappy state. As before, your part in our struggle remains indispensable. However, in today's situation you can no longer lead the party of the workers at home, in Greece. A party leadership can only be one that really leads the party, and can only consist of such members of the Central Committee who, at home in Greece, stand at the head of the party organizations . . .'. These 20 comrades then go on to reject the decisions of the February plenum and declare them invalid.

The letter had as its result the dissolution of the 'United Central Committee' of Partsalides, and the unconditional acknowledgment of the priority of the home-based party over the external one. By taking up this position Partsalides *de facto* acknowledged the real situation. It should be added, however, that the disbandment of the 'United cc' did not solve the party crisis.

On May 1st the 'home' Political Bureau published its standpoint on the inner-party crisis in the illegal paper *Avghi*. The 'home' members of the Central Committee likewise rejected the February decisions and held the action of Koliyannis to be unconstitutional. They appealed to the party abroad to turn away from the fratricidal factional fight, and went on to call for the convening of a party congress to elect a new leadership. Their call ends with an appeal to all Communists to unite round the home-based Political Bureau so as to develop to the maximum the fight against the Greek dictatorship—the party's major task.

Chile

James Petrá

Four years have gone by since the Christian Democrat régime of Eduardo Frei took power in Chile. In every election since, the voters, especially the urban workers and the rural peasantry, those most concerned with basic social reforms, have expressed their disapproval of Frei's policies. In the municipal elections of 1967 the Christian Democratic candidates obtained 36 per cent of the vote, almost 20 per cent less than in the presidential elections of 1964 and 7 per cent less than they obtained in the congressional elections.¹ In a senatorial by-election

¹ This article, written before the February 1969 congressional elections, has only been confirmed by the results: further losses by the Christian Democrats, both to the left and to the Right.

in the provinces of O'Higgins-Colchagua in June 1967 Frei's hand-picked candidate and leading ideologist of the right-wing of the party, Jaime Castillo Velasco, was defeated by a marxist candidate. The results of a senatorial by-election in southern Chile, considered one of the more traditional and under-developed areas and made up of many smallholders, created the greatest surprise. Here, in 1964, Frei gained over 60 per cent of the vote. The Christian Democrats led by Frei nominated a recent convert who was not long ago a member of the right wing Conservative Party, rejecting a staunch supporter of radical agrarian reform, for this by-election. The candidate supported by the Frei government was defeated, gaining less than 40 per cent of the vote, by a left-wing Radical with Communist support. In union election after union election (steel, metallurgy, or cement) the pro-Frei state—if it existed at all—has been defeated. In industries such as the copper mines where there was a minority of pro-Frei union leaders prior to his term of office they have been defeated (many Christian Democratic trade unionists have attempted, usually unsuccessfully, to disassociate themselves from Frei's *mano dura* hard hand policy toward the working class).

In November 1967 the police and army opened fire and killed or injured at least twenty-two persons participating in a general strike called by the leftist-led Central Labour Federation (CUTCH) to protest the Frei government's forced savings scheme. Over eight hundred citizens were arrested. The central point in dispute was the government's plan to cut down on the purchasing power of the wage-earning classes. By withholding a quarter of an expected wage increase (granted to keep wages up to price rises) the Frei government claimed this scheme would reduce inflationary pressures and create investment capital. The burden for achieving monetary stability and development under Frei as under previous oligarchical régimes largely falls on those least able to bear it—the wage-earning classes.

To understand the substantial and persistent decline in popularity of the Frei government it is necessary to survey its performance in several key areas. The average per capita gross national product for the past two years (1966, 1967) grew at the rate of 2.2 per cent, below even the 2.5 per cent minimum established by the Alliance for Progress. The growth in 1966 was basically due to the rise in the price of copper and to the performance of the public sector which showed a considerable increase in consumption and investment. In 1967 the sharp decline in the economy—registering a negative *per capita* growth rate—coincided with the drop in copper prices. Instead of diversifying her exports Chile has become increasingly dependent on copper. Mineral products accounted for 85 per cent of total Chilean exports. In 1967 copper alone accounted for 70 per cent and industrial goods 14 per cent. In the short run Frei has done very little to alleviate the Chilean economy's vulnerability to external fluctuations in prices.

Economic Record

In 1965–66 government sources indicate a 12.6 per cent raise in real income. However, this improvement in the standard of living was not

mainly the result of government policy. The level established by law for 1966 stipulated a real increase of only 2.5 per cent over 1965. In other words, increased salaries were the result of concessions obtained by wage and salaried workers either through negotiations or struggle in many cases against government and police harassment. In 1967 very little if any increase in income was expected. The short-term limitations in income redistribution between 1965-67 were countered by regressive tax trends and continued unemployment. Direct tax accounted for a reduced share of total budgetary tax revenues, declining from 35 per cent in 1965 to 33 per cent in 1966. Sales tax which accounted for 23 per cent of revenues in 1965, accounted for 24 per cent in 1967. The proportion of unemployed in the construction trades was 13 per cent in June 1965 and 4 per cent in industry while in June 1967 unemployment reached 17 and 5.3 per cent in the same sectors.

Industrial growth during the Frei government has been unsteady. While industrial production increased seven per cent in 1966 it declined 10 per cent in the first months of 1967. The impetus for development has not come from the domestic private sector. Private sector savings were negative in 1966 and 1967 (-14.8). Public savings have accounted for an increasing proportion of gross savings, jumping from 27 per cent in 1965 to 46 per cent in 1967. Equally important Frei development program has become increasingly dependent on foreign financing, external sources accounting for 7 per cent in 1965 and 15 per cent in 1967.

The Frei government's economic stabilization programme was temporarily mildly successful, reducing inflation to a 25.9 per cent increase in 1965 and 17 per cent in 1966. In 1967, however, inflation doubled the 12 per cent rate which Frei had set for that year. Further instability may result from attempts by wage and salaried groups to catch up with expected loss in income due to inadequate readjustment and the forced savings scheme proposed by the government.

Social Reforms

A similar pattern appears regarding the social reforms proposed by the government. In 1964 Chile had a shortage of 600,000 houses—most citizens who resided in shacks and huts (*callampas*, *conventillos*, *ranchos*, etc). According to the revolutionary rhetoric of the Christian Democrats 360,000 homes were to be built in six years. In 1966 government projections were close to the actual output, 52,100 houses were built out of the 53,850 planned. In 1967 only one-half of the plan was realized. In 1967 it is estimated that only 22,000 of the estimated 59,000 houses were built. Much more serious, however, is the fact that the programme of building low-income housing has been a greater failure than is shown by the aggregate figures. While in 1965, 22,000 low-income houses were built against the 31,000 projected, in 1967 only 8,500 were built out of the 40,000 projected. Housing loans continue to flow to the more affluent strata of society. Public housing construction declined from 36,000 in 1965 to approximately 10,000 in 1967. Given population growth rate of 2.5 per cent per year the housing programme of the Frei government is hardly holding its own.

In the agricultural sector average real income increased in 1965 and 1966, while overall production barely kept up with population growth. Food crops declined and very little was done in the way of redistributing the land. While industrial crops and corn showed a per capita production growth, key staple foods like wheat, rice, beans, potatoes, beef and milk showed a decline. Wheat imports doubled from 1961 (300,000 tons) to 1966 (600,000 tons). Milk imports jumped from 150 million litres in 1960 to 400 million litres. The overall growth rate for the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, hunting, fishing) of 2 per cent did not keep up with population growth (2.5 per cent). In sum Frei has done little to solve Chile's agricultural production crises.

The same negative result appears regarding land redistribution. In 1962 Law 15 020 authorized the State to expropriate poorly developed and abandoned farmlands. Up to the end of 1964, hardly any expropriations occurred. Corporación de la Reforma Agraria (CORA) paid cash for a few *fundos* which were distributed to new owners. Because of the expense and lack of CORA funds, land distribution was minimal. Poorly worked or abandoned lands were not made productive.

Christian Democratic rhetoric called for an agrarian reform which would result in a massive land redistribution as a step toward development of the agricultural sector. An agrarian reform bill was submitted to Congress. After two and a half years of debate Congress passed a watered down version in July 1967. There are many loopholes in the law. Thus one company, *Sociedad Explotadora de Tierra del Fuego*, owning 1,086,000 hectares, and ten other agro-businesses owning 500,000 hectares, are exempted. The profitable vineyards of southern Chile also are exempted from the agrarian reform.

The number of hectares of lands expropriated increased during 1965-66, but declined in the first half of 1967, owing to difficulties encountered by CORA in taking possession of the farms expropriated. Out of a total of 468 properties expropriated, lands have been distributed and farming plans initiated for only 148; of the remainder, about 200 currently present legal problems, since their owners refuse to accept the amount of indemnification offered by CORA to compensate for on-farm improvements (tenant housing, warehouses, silos, etc). Approximately 120 farms whose owners consider the expropriation unjustified are the subject of litigation.

CORA's activities have affected 10 per cent of the total irrigated area of the country and 4.5 per cent of all unirrigated land. However, 10.6 per cent of the irrigated land and 29 per cent of the unirrigated land was owned by decentralized State institutions, primarily the National Health Service—(*Servicio Nacional de Salud*). The big private estates have hardly been touched. The purpose of agrarian reform was to set up family farms. Goals are stated in terms of number of families settled on the lands expropriated by CORA. During the election campaign and shortly thereafter the government called for the settlement of 100,000 rural families in Chilean agriculture. The Frei government soon began to retreat on its original goal. In a statement in October 1966, the

Minister of Finance reduced the target for the 1965-70 period to minimum goal of 40,000 families or a maximum of 60,000. In order to settle 40,000 to 60,000 families, assuming ten hectares of irrigated land or the equivalent in unirrigated land, 40 hectares per family, approximately 400,000 hectares of irrigated or 600,000 unirrigated land required, representing between 15 per cent and 24 per cent of arable land in the country.

In 1965-66 period, CORA settled 4,000 families on a total of 89 farms, which approximately one half were already residing on lands transferred by the National Health Service. In 1967 CORA estimated that 7,500 families would be settled. However, only 712 families were settled in the first six months of 1967. International agencies estimate that CORA probably did not settle more than 4,000 families in 1967. At this rate, 8,000 families in three years, the Frei government will be lucky to settle half of the latest 'pessimistic' goal of 40,000 families in six years, leaving 330,000 families without land.

The expense of the agrarian reform programme presents a major problem for the Frei government.

The cost of the programme for 55,000 families in 1967-70 would amount to almost E 1.45 billion at 1967 prices. This figure may be under-estimated, since it assumes a recovery of 80 per cent on loans designed to cover the working capital needs of the new owners. Figures on recovery of loans granted to settlements formed by La 15 020 show a level of 25 per cent. Because of other commitments the Frei government is highly unlikely to choose to invest all of its public investment funds in agrarian reform. As a result very few families will receive land in the next few years.

Despite the enormous attention that Christian Democratic ideology has given to agrarian reform, in the sense of distributing the land to the peasants, the Frei government's actual policy has been directed toward encouraging more private investment by current owners. The index of imported tractors and farm machinery has jumped from a value of 28 in 1964 to 82 in 1966. Increases in herd formation and trees planted in orchards also suggest that Frei's real programme is less redistributive and more oriented toward providing incentives to the big landowners to increase production. Within this strategy the 'agrarian reform' is best comes down to increased wage and fringe benefits for the peasants—not land.

Because of Christian Democratic rhetoric it is widely and erroneously believed that the Christian Democrats support an 'independent' or 'progressive' foreign policy. Two statements by Chile's Foreign Minister, Gabriel Valdes, should correct that misjudgment. On Vietnam: "I must recall and support the position of the United States of the United Kingdom, and of the non-aligned countries, as well as of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which can be expressed in the words used by President Johnson when he said: "We have said that we are prepared to negotiate anywhere and at any time", adding that "The people of South Viet-Nam must have the right to elect, the right

to determine their own destiny, in free elections in the South or throughout all Viet-Nam". We are gratified that this decision was so decisively repeated by Mr Goldberg a few days ago here in this Assembly. His appeal should be heard and accepted.'

Concerning the Dominican elections in which Bosch was not even able to leave his home to campaign, for fear he would be killed, as were scores of Catholics and leftists by the Right-wing military restored to power by the US marines, Valdes stated: 'The United Nations also made a positive effort towards peace in the painful conflict which the people of the Dominican Republic suffered in their struggle for freedom—a struggle which, fortunately, found a political solution that will permit this brother-country to choose its own government. That was the solution advocated by Chile from the very beginning.'

It is precisely because of Frei's obligations and dependence on the U.S., his policy of supporting the great financial and business elites, that he has failed in any way to represent the rural and urban classes pushing for basic changes. Chile—allegedly the most 'advanced' model of bourgeois democracy and capitalist reformism in Latin America—merely confirms the law of the continent: only a mass socialist revolution will deliver the poor from their secular exploitation .



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The Belgrade Student Insurrection

Chronology of Events

he Explosion : A troop of actors was scheduled to perform free of charge on the second of June before an audience of 'Youth-Action' workers camped near a large complex of student dormitories in New Belgrade, a suburb of Belgrade. Student representatives had requested that the performance be held in a large open amphitheatre so that those other than members of the Youth-Action could attend. Announcing that such free cultural events were the privilege of the Youth-Action only, the authorities scheduled the performance for a small theatre. Angered by this, several students attempted to force their way into the theatre before the performance, but after a short struggle were expelled by the police. News of the expulsion flashed through the student village and soon a crowd of over a thousand students gathered in front of the theatre. After only a few minutes of hesitation the crowd attacked the theatre, breaking windows, popping off the doors and fighting with those already inside. Police reinforcements arrived with a firetruck, but before they could use its hoses the students captured and burned it. At this the police attacked. The students responded with barricades made of overturned cars and stones. After several violent clashes the students retreated to their dormitory village to discuss further action.

March on Belgrade: Discussions lasting through the night produced a plan whereby the students would march ~~in mass~~ the next morning in a central square in downtown Belgrade. There they would place before the public the following demands: the immediate release of all students arrested in the previous day's riot, the resignation of the chief of police and the withdrawal of all police from the student village in Ne Belgrade.

On the morning of the third of June, three to four thousand students formed up and began the 10 kilometre march to downtown Belgrade. Approximately midway they were met by a blockade of thousands of police gathered from all over Serbia. As they neared the blockade the President of the Parliament of Serbia and the President of the League of Communists stepped forward and invited the students to negotiate. But without warning, soon after negotiations had begun, the police opened fire with their pistols and charged the students. In the violent battle that ensued 60 to 70 people were wounded, including the two government officials who had attempted to negotiate with the students.

Mass Meeting: That afternoon ten thousand students met in Ne Belgrade and decided to form an 'Action Committee' to achieve the demands. While this meeting was going on, in downtown Belgrade a group of several hundred students occupied the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty of the University of Belgrade. Later that afternoon groups of students distributed in the streets and cafés leaflets which read as follows:

DEMANDS

1. The rapid solution of the employment problem facing new university graduates, most of whom have to go abroad if they want to find any sort of employment;
2. The suppression of the great inequalities in Yugoslavia;
3. The establishment of real democracy and self-management relations;
4. The immediate release of all arrested students;
5. The resignation of the chief of police;
6. Convene the Parliament to discuss the demands of students;
7. The resignation of the directors of all Belgrade newspapers, radio and tv for having deliberately falsified the events of the June 2nd.

On the evening of June 3rd thousands of students in Nis, a large industrial centre in Serbia, marched in the streets manifesting their solidarity with the students of Belgrade.

Occupation of the Faculties: As mentioned before, the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty was occupied on the afternoon of June 3rd. It was there that the organizational forms, the general assembly of all the students and professors and the functional action committees, were born. From the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty the occupation of other faculties was organized. With a high degree of inter-faculty coordination, students established committees for the elaboration of their demands, for political agitation and propaganda, and for the construction of student-worker unity. It was not long before the facades of the buildings were covered with posters carrying such slogans as: 'students, workers and peasants unite against the bureau

crats', 'tomorrow without those who sold yesterday', 'down with the red bourgeoisie', 'show a bureaucrat that he is incapable and he will quickly show you what he is capable of', 'more schools, fewer cars', and 'brotherhood and equality for *all* the people in Yugoslavia'.

Isolation of the Movement: But as the students organized, the State began to act. At a special meeting of the City Committee of the League of Communists, the Mayor of Belgrade warned, 'the enemy is active these days in Belgrade . . . we cannot allow demonstrations against our system'. The meeting decided to take three actions. Firstly, it filled the streets with steel-helmeted riot police under orders to prevent all demonstrations. Secondly, it called on Communist League cells in stores, institutes and factories to prevent all contact between students and workers. Thirdly, League cells in factories were instructed to organize armed workers' militias to prevent students from destroying social property. Thus, by the evening of June 4th, the League of Communists had tightened its grip and effectively isolated the 'enemy' from the rest of society.

On June 5th, the second day of faculty occupation, the police began to encircle the faculty buildings. By midday it became obvious to all that the police were mobilizing for attack. *Borba*, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Socialist Alliance, justified the attack in advance by printing, 'If we want our self-management democracy to develop normally, we must protect it by all means available against those who would impose their will by means of disorder in the street'.

As if to dishearten the students, letters from workers' councils in factories in and around Belgrade began to flow in. Following the same formula, all the letters expressed complete faith in the leaders of Yugoslavia and attacked the students for their selfish impatience and destruction of social property.

From the first day of occupation certain professors, particularly those of the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty, took the part of the students. Beyond these few professors, only groups of writers and artists made public their support of the student movement. But by midday of the 5th, many professors began to return to the faculties. These late-comers, most of whom were high-ranking party officials, government ministers, economic, scientific or technical consultants as well as professors, warned the students of their total isolation and advised that, with their aid, the students would gain all their demands by means of existing party channels.

On the evening of June 5th it was learned that Sarajevo students demonstrating their solidarity with the students of Belgrade had been brutally attacked by the police.

Early on the morning of June 6th the students decided to take the advice of the late-coming professors and to frame a summary list of demands to be presented to the University Committee of the League of Communists. Printed in *Student*, the official student newspaper, the demands were expressed in the following action programme.

POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAMME

In order to make possible the most rapid and effective solution to the major problems facing our socialist society and self-management community free and equal people and nations, we find the following to be necessary:

I

1. To adopt measures which will quickly reduce the great social differences in our community. In connection with this we require: that the social principle of distribution according to work be systematically applied; that criteria for determining personal income be clearly and exactly established; that a minimum and maximum personal income be determined; the abolition of differences in personal income based on monopolistic or other privileged non-socialist positions, and action against the accumulation of private property in a non-socialist manner with immediate nationalization of improperly gained private property. Privilege in our society must be liquidated. Measures are necessary to progressively tax incomes above the determined maximum.

2. In order to make possible a rapid and effective solution to the problem of unemployment, a long range development concept of our economy must be adopted, based on the right to work for all people in our country. Following this, it is necessary to adopt a corresponding investment policy in order that full employment be created along with improved material and cultural conditions for all our people. Measures must be taken to make possible the employment of young qualified workers. To this end, honorary and overtime work must be reduced to a minimum or prohibited altogether. Also, the unfilled work places must be filled only by those possessing the necessary qualifications.

3. Measures are required for the rapid creation of self-management relations in our society and for the destruction of those bureaucratic forces which have hampered the development of our community. Self-management relations must be systematically developed not only in working organizations but also at all levels of our society, communal and federal, in such a way as to make possible real control by producers over these self-management organs. The essential point in the development of real self-management is that workers independently decide on all important conditions of work and on the distribution of their surplus value.

All self-management organs must be responsible for the completion of their particular tasks and must be held socially responsible in case they fail to complete these tasks. Personal responsibility must be given its full importance.

4. In composition with the development of self-management organs, social and political organizations, in particular the League of Communists, must adopt democratic internal reforms. Most importantly, a basic democratization of the means of public communication must be carried out. Finally, the democratization must make possible the realization of all freedoms and rights provided for in the Constitution.

5. Decisively stop all attempts to disintegrate or turn social property into the property of stock-holders. Energetically stop all attempts to turn private labour into the capital of individuals or groups. Both of these tendencies must be clearly made illegal by appropriate laws.

6. The housing law must be immediately amended to prevent speculation in social and private property.

7. Cultural relations must be such that communication is rendered impossible and that conditions are created so that cultural and creative facilities are open to all.

II

1. The educational system must be immediately reformed so as to answer the needs of development of economic, cultural and self-management relations.
2. To adopt a constitutional guarantee for the right of all young people to equal conditions of education.
3. To write into law the autonomy of the University.

Rejection of the Compromise: With the receipt of the above students' Action Programme, the University Committee of the Communist League expressed its solidarity with the student movement and began negotiations with the City Committee.

Also on June 6th the students addressed the following open letter to the workers of Yugoslavia: 'We are not fighting for our own material interests. We are enraged by the enormous social and economic differences in society. We do not want the working class to be sacrificed for the sake of the "reforms". We are for self-management, but against the enrichment of those who depend on and control the working class. We will not permit workers and students to be divided and turned one against the other. Your interests and our interests are the same, ours are the real interests of socialism.'

That evening several hundred workers attended the General Assembly at the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty and many spoke to an enthusiastic audience of students, workers and peasants. At the meeting it was first learned that the newspaper *Student* had been siezed by the State.

As negotiations between the University and City Committees of the Communist League were nearing a compromise agreement, the view that the students had lost control of their movement by allowing themselves to be represented by the University Committee began to win majority support among the students. Thus on the following day, when the University Committee presented the compromise agreement it had reached with the City Committee, the students promptly rejected it.

The Crisis and Tito's Solution: On June 9th events reached crisis proportions. All the newspapers were screaming for stern punishment of the rebellious students. The police closed in on the faculties and cut off all entry. A police unit stationed at the Faculty of Arts entered the building and beat and arrested many students. That evening it was announced that the President of Yugoslavia would address the nation on the following day.

On June 10th President Tito surprised the nation by supporting the students' Action Programme. He found it to be a challenge for Yugo-

slav Communists to turn words into deeds. Yes, he knew that they were extremists amongst the students and he also felt that he must condemn their use of violence. He praised, however, the new political consciousness of the students and declared it to be the fruit of self-management socialist relations. He called on all Communists to make reality of the students' programme. Finally, he added that if he could not engineer the realization of their programme then he would resign from his position as Head of State.

Learning of Tito's support for their programme, the students stormed out of their faculties and paraded in the streets of Belgrade. The police were nowhere to be seen. The evening papers announced that they had misinterpreted the students' programme and, after reconsidering it, found that they must agree with comrade Tito. Suddenly, the student found that their movement had achieved a semi-legal status.

Revolutionary Programme: The immediate fruit of Tito's support was to de-activate the mass movement. Now, they were told, they had done their bit and should concentrate on problems within the university. In most faculties these instructions were in fact followed, the exception being the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty. Here, together with their comrades from all other faculties, students continued to construct a radical critical position toward the society as a whole. They justified their claim for a new type of critical university linked to the working class by disputing the role of the League of Communists as the *avant-garde* of the working class. They claimed that the League of Communists was restoring capitalism in Yugoslavia.

Expulsion: The growing popularity of the General Assembly of the Philosophy Faculty provoked severe attacks from high party officials. In Tito's second speech to the nation he stated that there was not room in the university for extremist professors like those at the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty. Finally, on July 20th, the faculty was closed by the police and the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty Committee was expelled from the League of Communists.

The Social Significance of the Events in June

With the arrival of the summer vacation, the chronology of events ends. The question remains, what was the significance of the events in June for the various segments of Yugoslav society? There would seem to be no more direct and informative way of answering this question than by simply allowing representatives of these segments to speak for themselves. To make this possible, we have recorded conversations and discussions with peasants, workers, students, professors, and party functionaries.

Peasants

Interviews were carried out with peasants selling goods at a large open market place on the outskirts of Belgrade.

1. A middle-aged woman selling tomatoes and peaches, was asked what she thought of the students' demonstration in the city:

All this happened on June 5th, but on June 7th we succeeded in creating a sort of action committee made up of some of the workers to draft and send a telegram of support to the students.

4. But this was not the only method used by the League of Communists to prevent workers from joining the movement. The following is the text of a decision adopted by the Workers' Council of the L.M.T. factory of Belgrade.

DECISION

With the aim of preventing the enemy action of certain extremist groups amongst the students and in order to protect the interests of our workers' collective and the means of production entrusted to us by society for use, the Workers' Council carries out its responsibility which, as the duly elected self-management body, it owes to all members of the collective and to the society as a whole. We adopt the following decision:

1. To constitute a workers' militia to protect the property of the enterprise. The number of workers in the militia and their distribution will be determined by the director of the enterprise in consultation with the president of the Workers' Council, the president of the Workers' Syndicate in the enterprise, and the enterprise secretary of the League of Communists. The militia will carry out its duty continuously until instructed otherwise by the Workers' Council. Overtime work by the militia members will be paid from the general fund of the collective.
2. Group captains of working units are responsible for controlling the exits and entrances of the enterprise during working hours.
3. The entry of those not belonging to our collective nor to other enterprises with which we maintain daily contact can only be authorized by the director of the enterprise.
4. The carrying or distribution in the enterprise of any means for propaganda or agitation other than those regular and legal means of communication is prohibited. Those caught in such action will be considered as seriously ignoring their responsibility as workers. The group captains of working units are responsible for organizing and carrying out this decision.
5. Gatherings other than those already authorized are prohibited. All those interrupting working time by unauthorized acts will be held responsible for their acts.
6. Any remarks made in the name of our collective by others than those so authorized are prohibited. The breaking of this decision will be considered as a serious crime to the workers' collective.

These decisions concern all those workers that are not members of this collective but carry out their work within the enterprise.

The Workers' Council calls on all members to follow strictly all decisions and to take active part in their effective execution.

All social and political organizations within the enterprise are responsible for explaining these decisions and the manner of their execution.

Belgrade, June 6th 1968

Workers' Council
President
Engineer Milan Matic

Students and Professors

1. The students of the Engineering Faculty were among the most active during June. We recorded the following conversation with a group of students and their professor of mechanics. We asked the professor:

'What is your estimate of the success of the students' movements?'

Professor: 'We really gave the old State a punch where it hurts. Perhaps I should not say 'we', the students did it all. When I arrived, let's see that was a few days after they had already occupied the place, I found a group of young people that I didn't know existed. It was as if they had all at once woken up. They didn't ask, they demanded. They told me choose their side or get out of my office. That is what I liked best. Anyway, of course I chose to work with the students. We worked together in drawing up a set of demands which were found to be very close to those drawn up by other faculties. At any rate, we faced and still face difficult problems. The students must realize that as engineers they cannot begin to fathom the details of social and economic policy. They cannot butt their heads against the system, instead they must strive to make it more effective. We all agree on this now, in fact unity in the faculty and between faculties is stronger than it has ever been before. Now students from this faculty go to meetings in other faculties.'

Student 1: 'What do you mean we cannot fathom the details of 'social' policy? Damn it, we know what this society is all about, we live in it!'

Professor: 'Yes, I know you have a general idea what it is all about. But the fact is your impatience shows you lack depth in economics. For instance investment policy, can you begin to understand the sacrifice necessary for a rational investment policy?'

Student 1: 'No, I cannot understand why a "rational" investment policy should amount to only so much unemployment. You explain that to us.'

Professor: (laughing) 'It does sound absurd, doesn't it.'

Student 2: 'We do not understand, and I don't think I want to understand that sort of rationality. We are naive if that's what you mean. But you were the same when you came to power. Now you are rational and we are naive. Hell, I think your rationality is shit. You've got a double rationality, one for yourself and one for us. You tell us that we really punched the State where it hurts to get them to double the minimum wage from 15 to 30,000 Dinars a month. I'll bet you make from 300,000 to 400,000 a month.'

Student 3: 'That is our first job, to keep our movement from being captured by bureaucratic hands and from adopting a bureaucratic reform. Our second job is to organize with workers. And our third job

is to achieve real autonomy for the University so that not one set foot inside.'

Student 4: 'Yes, organize with workers. In Paris they can do that. I heard that they formed groups of workers and students. But here we couldn't begin to do that. All the factories were shut in our faces. There were police at the doors. They told the workers that we were sons of city-rich and that we were only interested in destroying the fruit of their labour, which they would have to work harder to replace. They even formed armed militias to attack us.'

Student 1: 'That was the work of the communists in the factories. They told the workers that, like they tell the workers everything. Hell, I know a lot of workers that didn't believe a word of it, but they couldn't do a thing about it. They don't have one single opportunity to speak. They are paid so little that they cannot afford to strike. There are so few jobs that they are afraid if they speak up they'll get fired and never find another job. They held interviews for a position of doorman at Radio Belgrade. Hell, 60 university graduates applied for the job. The forced isolation of the workers, their lack of a voice, low pay, and lack of job security are all used by the League of Communist functionaries in the factories to divide the workers from themselves and from us and finally to control them. If you ask me, that is the real "rationality" behind what you call an "investment policy".'

2. The focus of the student movement was beyond doubt located in the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty. The following is an abstract from a discussion held by the General Assembly of the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty on July 9th 1968.

The General Assembly began by describing the enemy as 'everyone who has something to lose through equality'. Following this, during a discussion of their enemy's total monopoly of the means of communication, it was noted that the most important reporter of the largest Yugoslav newspaper was present. As the reporter was one of the most vicious spokesman for their enemy, they asked him to explain his opposition.

Reporter: 'Well, I'm afraid I can't right now remember all the remarks I've written and as I didn't bring any material with me . . . (jeering from the students) . . . you must realize . . . I'm not responsible for what is printed in the paper. The final decision is out of my hands. (laughter)

I guess if you like, I can give you my general opinion of what you people are doing. Essentially you are senseless agitators. You're not going to agree with that! You believe you've grounds for your movement, but the fact is you are operating out of only a petit-bourgeois abstract humanism.

It is true that there are deformations in our socialist society, but these problems must be examined scientifically and so they are by all our institutions and, in fact, as you have seen fit to ignore, already many new laws have been passed to correct them. But you simply skip

lightly over these difficult problems that our leaders are presently facing, in order to disqualify *in toto* everything about our self management socialist institutions, together with our leaders.'

Assistant Professor: 'Please, would you give us a more precise definition of what you mean by "abstract humanism".'

Reporter: 'Abstract humanism, yes I can do that. One only has to glance at your literature to erase any doubt as to the nature of your ideology. The analysis that you make of the real difficulties facing our society is based on a simple-minded confusion of the various social, economic and technological problems on the one hand with the nature of management of the means of production on the other. This forces you to overlook the basically socialist nature of our society and the socialist motivation of our leaders. Instead, you strike out blindly at technology, against commodity relations, and even at self-management. But out of this sort of abstraction comes nothing more than more abstraction. This is why the content of your movement is of no value, unless you consider interruption of normal social activity as being of value.'

Student 1: 'You jump at the chance to attack our movement as non-socialist; as it attacks you, and as you are by definition and membership and law a socialist, then of course we cannot be socialist—by definition (laughter). But I ask, if you stand for socialism then why have you ignored that last article by our ambassador to the United Nations on Vietnam published in your paper. In short he said that the Viet Cong and United States are equally guilty in Viet Nam. I am insulted by that! A more reactionary view of the world revolution one could not imagine. Yet you have not jumped at the chance to attack this position. Is it because you were not paid to attack it?'

Reporter: 'Listen, I'm a simple reporter, my powers are limited. It would have done no good to attack that article. I can't change all our leaders' views. I'm just a little man with little ideas.'

Student 2: 'That sort of stuff doesn't go with us here. We don't rank people by their party functions, but by their contribution to society.'

Reporter: (angry now) 'I have defined for you abstract humanism in quite precise terms and you have nothing in reply but platitudes. You are silent too on commodity production, is it that you cannot defend your position?'

Professor 2: 'Yes, you are quite right, we do attack commodity production and we find it diametrically opposed to socialism. But we may not be strong enough to move our society towards socialism. Nevertheless, we say that you are building capitalism. We demand Marxist criticism of the class you are building and the class which you represent. No, we don't want any more of this empty so-called socialist propaganda. You have systematically divided and neutralized the power of the working class and in so doing you have created power and privilege for yourselves. What you happen to find opportunistically convenient you call socialism.'

Call what you have created what you like, but don't call it socialism. We here are for the real power in the hands of the working class, and if that is the meaning of self-management, then we are for self-management. But if self-management is nothing but a facade for the construction of the competitive profit mechanism of a bureaucratic managerial . . . why don't I say capitalist, class, then we are against it. No you are not socialist and you are not creating socialism. Perhaps we have no way to stop you. But we will attempt to build a truly critical university to help the working class to understand what you are doing in its name. Yes, you are an avant-garde, but not of the working class. Print that if you like!

3. Our last interview is with a professor of economics who at the same time serves as a Minister in the Federal Government of Yugoslavia. In other words we can expect him to speak as a professor and as an important member of the League of Communists. We asked him to tell us about the student movement and of his rôle in it.

'For two years now it has been evident that certain elements in Yugoslavia were preventing the effective application of legal measures adopted by the Parliament to better the life of people in Yugoslavia. In spite of the declared aim to construct a socialist society in this country, the everyday reality proved that the good will expressed in the measures was being sabotaged.

The saboteurs were the dead-wood pockets in the party, profiteers, parasites and speculators that have managed somehow to grow up and thrive in our society. But it must be stressed that such pockets worked against the expressed desires of the Communist Party and the socialist society as a whole.

Students and professors have repeatedly discussed the course of Yugoslav society and often formed sharp criticisms. Some students learned to grasp the reality and others only began to catch on; nevertheless, all carried the oppression on their backs. Some professors criticized, some defended. Students became effectively self-conscious of their position in society by means of this debate. There was bound to be an explosion. Most students saw no resemblance between the Yugoslavia of today and a 'socialist society'. They saw only the growing class of rich and powerful and the growing class of poor and weak. They saw unemployment rise and social services reduced. Unemployment was at an all-time high. They saw no reason to study, no reason to take a place in society; in fact, they saw no places in society to take. For this reason the incident that caused the explosion of the students revolt is of no importance.

I think I arrived at the faculty on June 5th, the second day that the students had occupied it. Some professors had arrived ahead of me. Some did not come at all. I became involved in two specific actions. First, together with several students we drew up the demands to be published in the students' paper. In general, the students were not

against society nor the League, but what they wanted was action not just words. I helped them phrase their demands in a realistic manner. There were of course extremists who doubted the ability of the Yugoslav system to carry out the programme and some cited foreign literature to attempt to prove their case. But ignoring these elements, together with the serious students we drew up a programme. The second task was to hold a meeting of the University Committee of the League of Communists. I am a member of this committee. We voted solidarity with the students' movement and attempted to contact the City Committee of the League of Communists. We met with this group but quickly the discussion degenerated.

The City Committee was dead against the students and were already taking the necessary steps to isolate the students. In the long run the meeting of the two committees had only one positive outcome; namely that if the University Committee prevented the students from demonstrating on the street, the City Committee would prevent the police from entering the faculties. I might mention that it was precisely this argument that the extremists used to try to convince the students that we were selling them out.

Well, you know the story of events. Today we are busy being vigilant and forming measures to push through to the upper echelons of the party. Of course extremists still exist but they will be controlled.

The problems of Yugoslav development are complicated and the students must learn that they cannot get their aims overnight. They must learn to work with the organized political structure. They must drive out the speculators and profiteers, but not attack the positive elements out of ignorance. Together we are making progress in this direction. Our movement is semi-legal. For instance, *Student* is prohibited but the police do not stop it from being sold on the streets.

How would I assess the overall success of the movement? The problems facing Yugoslavia are difficult. We know that the direction of the Yugoslav system towards a commodity socialism with self-management is the only way, but at the same time this involves highly difficult technical-economic problems. Nevertheless, the students have supplied the force to begin anew the fight to oust those who are against the system or would use it for personal gain. The most immediate result of the movement was the doubling of the minimum wage from 15,000 to 30,000 Dinars per month.

We have followed with great interest the situation in Paris. I would say that there are essentially two differences between what happened there and here. Here the Communist Party played a positive role, or at least a part of the Party did. Second, the students of Belgrade were not attacking the social system.'

Party Spokesman

No consideration of the significance of the events of June to the various segments of Yugoslav society would be complete without

the reaction of the 'red bourgeoisie', namely the League of Communists. We are lucky here as on June 17th, *Politika*, Belgrade's largest newspaper, published the following remarks by the Chairman of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia on precisely this subject.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING OUR PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

Mandatory Economic Differentiation

The revolutionary transcendence of our economy and society carries within it deep and sharp contradictions, many of which we have studied. This is the integral role, the flow, and the meaning of the Reforms. These contradictions and resulting problems stand at the foundation of actual political and ideological movements in contemporary Yugoslavia. The Reform has made necessary strong economic differentiation based on the results of work conditioned by the strong forces of our commodity money economy. At the present level of development this sort of differentiation is yet more emphasized because of the large differences in the structure of factors of production in individual sectors, branches and enterprises . . .

Who Loses on Our Society and Why

The difference in essence of the criticisms and reactions coming from the most backward parts of society are important. These are the parts where reform has endangered old relations and institutions and monopolies and where the foundations of the old structures are already crumbling. The major concentration of such forces lies in those low productive working organizations in the economic and social activities which do not show the capability nor the preparedness to move along with the reform and are not able to stand the ever-increasing pace of social work. It is for this reason that they wish to lean on the State. They wish to cover their unproductive and disorganized work with the surplus value of others. Here we can make special mention of the primitive parts of the administration in the State mechanism as well as in other areas of social work, which because of their lack of qualifications and because of their incapability feel endangered by the new and more qualified workers.

Anti-Socialist Forces

All the anti-self-management and anti-socialist forces have united to destroy the economic reforms. Because of the increases in the scope of self-management, all the anti-democratic forces, from counter-revolutionaries, nationalists, pseudo-liberals, conservative bureaucrats, to the neo-Stalinists, found themselves hard pressed and were forced to unite in resistance to the economic reforms and to the progress of self-management. The wheel of history moves at its own speed and in its own direction. As our experience shows, whenever we are passing through a transitional period it is always necessary to make a new qualitative strike to increase the strength of social relations to stop the growth of all those forces which want to sabotage the wheel of history. And particularly today we witness the actions of such forces. In their continuous effort to stop the growth of self-management, the bureaucratic statists and other anti-self-management forces are making great efforts to take advantage of our weaknesses. It is their aim intentionally to negate all the results which our society has created and artificially to create political agitation, to sow disbelief in the Communist Party, and with all the means at their disposal to disqualify our democratic institutions and political forms and to carry out a general attack on the foundations of the self-management system.

For some years a group of intellectuals in the university have developed their ideological platform, a platform diametrically opposed to that of the League of Communists. At the very beginning of the students' action this group tried to take over the political leadership to guide the students beyond the limits of existing social, political and self-management structures and to attempt to foist on the students a political line that turned them into mere objects for manipulation.

This ideological political current is concerned with the commodity relations of production and distribution, but has not, of course, even taken up the problem of statism and bureaucracy. They ignore the role of the Communist Party and other socialist organizations with their real theoretical and practical fight against bureaucracy. They have attacked instead the so-called political bureaucracy. By this they mean all the political structures, democratic and political institutions, political forms, and the carriers of political functions. Letting their arrow fly against such a defined political bureaucracy, this current tries to destroy self-management and the political structures of our society and in particular to disqualify the Communist Party.

This small group has for years attempted to become the champions of all humanist intelligence. According to their thesis the working class has been neutralized from playing an active role as a historic subject, and its avant-garde has become a political bureaucratic structure. From such a thesis they have drawn the conclusion that humanist intelligence must take an active role in society, to make 'radical' criticism of all that exists, to 'open the eyes' of the working class and to 'stimulate' it to take the direction defined by them.

For years this current has attacked viciously commodity production, the law of value, and the income principle of our society, stating that we dehumanize men and their social relations and that we are restoring capitalism. Attacking the commodity relation character of our economy they have insulted the very nature of self-management. Using the most common sort of demagoguery this current continues to try to turn present criticism of our rather large social inequalities into arguments for crude equality.

These currents have even come out for political pluralism, for a multi-party organized society, that is for legalizing different and even opposing ideological platforms within the Communist Party.

All of their political theses have taken the form of political action, especially in the last two years. That this ideological current has grown into a political opposition to the Communist Party and democratic self-management orientation of our society can be seen by the means which they use in the battle for their aims. In the arsenal of these means the greatest is a nihilist underestimation of all the achievements of our self-management society. Using half-truths and misinformation, social and political demagoguery, using all methods to disqualify political forms, applying their kind of red guard action and intellectual terrorism to all those that oppose their point of view.

In the course of the students' action all the reactionary and anti-self-management forces united in an action unrelated to the real desires of students and professors. These are in reality counter-revolutionary circles from immigrant centres, remnants of class enemies, nationalists, unitarians of all colours, Rankovičites, pseudo-liberals and others. It is characteristic that this united heterogeneous force which launched its front against our self-management socialism saw as its scout, its secured logistic point, its first outpost, precisely

the earlier-mentioned so-called radical humanist current, estimating it—under the present conditions—as most successful in discrediting our socialism. These forces and their heterogeneous front and their ever-increasing resistance increasingly calculate on and cooperate with international reactionary political currents. As is well known, at the head of these forces stand various ‘philosophers’ at the Faculty of Philosophy. Notably Mihajlo Marković, head of the Department of Philosophy, has openly stated in his writings that we are restoring capitalism.’

The official reaction by the appropriate committee of the League of Communists was written into law on July 20th 1968. By excluding the committees of the Philosophy and Sociology Faculty from the League of Communists they, in turn, denied the members of these committees the right of political activity. The following decision was published in *Politika* on July 20th 1968:

DECISION CONCERNING THE EXPULSION OF THE CELLS OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS AT THE PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIOLOGY FACULTY

Estimating that a number of communists and cells of the League of Communists at the Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology have for a long period, according to their ideological views and political behaviour, openly opposed the ideological-political line and actions of the Yugoslav League of Communists, and because of an atmosphere that has been created in these cells for a long time making it impossible to carry out political differentiation: the City Conference of the League of Communists of Serbia, Belgrade, therefore *Decides To Exclude the Cells of the League of Communists at the Faculty for Philosophy and Sociology.*

The reasons which have motivated the City Conference of the L.C.S., Belgrade, in this action are given in the information prepared by the City Committee for this meeting and which was adopted by the Conference.

The City Conference of the L.C.S., Belgrade, at the same time forms a commission consisting of . . . (names) . . . as members. The above-named will investigate the individual responsibility of communists from these cells and carry out reregistration of members, keeping in mind the fact that in formalizing positions and in making decisions at meetings of these cells not all members of the League of Communists took part.

The Red Bourgeoisie

There is a folk saying in Yugoslavia: the snow falls on the hills not to cover them but to show the tracks of the animals. The June version of this saying was: the barricade is not to block the street but to show who is on the other side. For the students, workers and peasants of Yugoslavia the importance of the June insurrection was precisely in unveiling their class enemies.

The students’ insurrection clearly exhibited two tendencies: that of the liberal faction of the League of Communists and that of the ‘extremists’. The direction of the first tendency as exhibited within the students’ movement was clearly reformist. The Action Programme was the result of the intervention of such professors as the economist interviewed earlier. The liberal position in its entirety was

best and most authoritatively described by the statement of the Chairman of the Central Committee of the League of Communists. The fact is that these liberals have represented the ruling faction of the League of Communists since 1957. They were the authors of the economic reforms of 1965. They are the most bitter critics of bureaucracy, or the negative phenomena resulting from the presence of the uneducated or unqualified remnants of an earlier stage of development whose only role as a social force was the organization of society on the model of the Soviet Union.

Since the break with the Soviet Union in 1948, this liberal current has enlisted the democratic forces in Yugoslav society in its fight against the conservative centralists. These liberal communists saw the conditions for further development as being: 1) the re-entrance of the Yugoslav economy into the international capitalist market and 2) the decentralization of certain purely technical and material decisions to the micro-level. Condition 1) was ideologized as 'socialist commodity production' and 2) as 'self-management'.

The impact of the forces of international capitalism on Yugoslav industry was far greater than the liberals imagined and, in 1965, they were forced to institute reforms designed to improve the position of industry. 'Mergers' were promoted, measures for technological advance adopted, educational facilities were limited and strictly accommodated to the needs of industry, and social services were cut to a minimum. The self-management councils of workers were, in turn, faced with such decisions as the reduction of wages, the reduction of the number of workers in their factory, or bankruptcy. The only growth that the Communist liberals could stimulate with their reforms turned out to be in unemployment, in regional inequality, and in nationalism.

As we have seen, the liberals blamed all these 'deformations' on the conservative bureaucrats or on technically unqualified sections of the party. It is for this reason that the liberals are often called 'technocrats'.

It would be mistaken, however, to limit the results of liberalization measures to these negative phenomena. The fact is that to carry out their economic reforms, the League of Communists were forced to institute democratic reforms. What the League called self-management, i.e., the decentralization of low-level economic decisions, was in the beginning interpreted by the working class as a giant increase in their responsibility and freedom in comparison with their earlier Stalinist experience. The working people of Yugoslavia could not help but hope that self-management meant that they, not a particular clique, would make basic social and economic decisions. Out of this hope was born a new political current in Yugoslavia. Within the Workers' Councils and particularly in the University this current began to take the form of a political action programme for the realization of socialism in Yugoslavia. In June the students of Belgrade rose up, marched and fought for this programme. In June the enemies of socialism were unveiled for all to see. Who was on the other side of the barricade? None other than the 'red bourgeoisie', the League of Communists.

French Absolutism

The Crucial Phase, 1620-1629

ALEXANDRA DIMITRIEVNA LUBLINSKAYA

Translated by BRIAN PEARCE

Foreword by J. H. ELLIOT

'This book first appeared in Russian in 1965, and its appearance in English is a major literary event. An important collection of French manuscripts, migrating in the haphazard way important documents do, come to be stored in Leningrad, and it is fortunate that they have fallen into the capable hands of Professor Lublinskaya. ... What is exciting about it is that it suggests the possibility of common ground between Marxist and "bourgeois" methods of historical interpretation' *The Times Educational Supplement*

In her detailed analysis of French political, social and economic history during part of the reign of Louis XIII, Professor Lublinskaya presents a penetrating critique of the whole 'general crisis' interpretation of seventeenth-century European history. 80s. net

The Russian Landed Gentry and the Peasant Emancipation of 1861

TERENCE EMMONS

A social history of the emancipation of the serfs, the most important event in Russian history from the time of Peter the Great to the 1905 Revolution. Professor Emmons describes the circumstances under which emancipation took place and, in particular, how the gentry land-owners were involved in the process. 85s. net

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Acknowledgement

Martin Nicolaus' article first appeared in *The Movement*, a West Coast weekly affiliated to SDS and to SNCC. *The Movement's* address is 449 14th Street, San Francisco, California, 94103, U.S.A.

Announcement

The money paid for the advertisement for Daniel James' version of Che Guevara's Diaries in NLR 53 has been transmitted to an appropriate national liberation movement. The authentic diaries of Che Guevara have, of course, been published in Britain by *Black Dwarf*, as a special issue, and in book form by both The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and Jonathan Cape. *Black Dwarf* No. 12 carried an account by Richard Gott of the CIA's assistance in the fabrication of Daniel James' version.

Errata—NLR 53

In Hans-Jürgen Krahls' article, Footnote 3 should have referred to *The German Ideology*, and Footnote 7 to Oskar Negt's *Politics and Protest*. In Andrew Asheron's article, pages 56/57 and 58/59 should have been printed in the reverse order.

THE ROCK GARDEN

SOUL

SOUL: THE MAINSTREAM

Aretha Franklin
James Brown
Otis Redding*
Sam and Dave*
Joe Tex
Wilson Pickett
Jackie Wilson
Chuck Jackson
Percy Sledge
James and Bobby Purify
Deon Jackson
Carla Thomas*
Eddie Floyd*
The Impressions
Ike and Tina Turner
Gladys Knight
*Memphis division

SOUL: MOTOR CITY

The Supremes
The Four Tops
Smokey and the Miracles
Stevie Wonder
The Temptations
The Isley Brothers
Martha and the Vandellas
Marvin Gaye
The Marvellates
Junior Walker

BLUE-EYED SOUL

The Righteous Brothers
Mitch Ryder
The Soul Survivors
The Young Rascals (pre-'67)
Tom Jones
The Magnificent Men
The Cakes

THE ROLLING STONES

BLUES ROCK

Who (through '66)
The Spencer Davis Group
Big Brother & the Holding Company
The Grateful Dead
Captain Beefheart
The Yardbirds (pre-'67)
Van Morrison
The Animals (pre-'67)

SOUL JAZZ

Ramsey Lewis Trio
Young-Holt Trio
Cannonball Adderly
Jimmy Smith

LAS VEGAS LOUNGE ROCK

Trying to get out:
Lou Rawls
Dionne Warwick
The Motown Acts
Lesley Gore
Petula Clark
Trying to get in:
Frank Sinatra

ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK

The Who
The Kinks
Moby Grape
The Candyman
The Paupers

SCHLOCK ROCK

The 4 Seasons
Sonny and Cher
Paul Revere and the Raiders
The Turtles
Pet Clark
The Monkees*
Herman's Hermits*
Nancy Sinatra
The Dave Clark 5
The Buckingham
Johnny Rivers
The Convells*
The Shangri-Las
Peter and Gordon
Chad and Jeremy
The 6 Americans
The Tremeloes
Gary Lewis and the Playboys
*Prepubescent division

ROCK CANDY

The Mamas and the Papas
The Beach Boys (pre-'66)
The Loin' Spoonful (post-'66)
The Left Banks
Buffalo Springfield
The Young Rascals ('67)
The Grassroots
Neil Diamond
The Hollies

CRITICS

Richard Goldstein
— Village Voice, N. Y. Times
Robert Christgau — Esquire
Paul Williams, Sandy Perlman,
Jon Landau — Crawdaddy
Peter Winkler — Cheetah
Ralph Gleason*, Jann Wenner
— Rolling Stone
Bob Shelton* — N. Y. Times
Nat Hentoff*
John Kretz — Vibrations
*Come-latelys

FIRST TOP-40 RADIO SHOW Make-Believe Ballroom

HITMAKERS

Leonard Bernstein
Dick Clark
Bill Drake*
Glenn Gould
Bertha Porter*
*Instant Purity Department
*Billboard Award for Recordbreaking
at Hartford, Conn.

ROCK OF AGES

Chuck Berry
Elvis Presley
Ray Charles
Everly Brothers

Bill Haley
Buddy Holly
The Shirelles
Chubby Checker

The Coasters
The Drifters
Little Richard
The Platters

Dion
Jerry Lee Lewis
The Orioles
The Penguins

THE BEATLES

THE BEATLES LEGACY
The Bee Gees

FREE-FLOATING PRETENSIONS

Eric Burdon
Sonny

ROCK BLUES

Butterfield Blues Band
The Electric Flag
The Cream
Blood, Sweat, and Tears
The Chambers Brothers
Steve Miller Blues Band
Siegel-Schwall Blues Band

CAMP ROCK

Harpers Bizarre
5th Dimension
Spanky
Sopwith Camel

PRODUCERS:

Gray Eminence
Phil Spector
Paul Rothchild
Jerry Weiler
Lou Adler
Bob Crase
Tom Wilson
Shadow Morton
Jack "Specs" Nitzsche
Grossman and Court
Koppelman-Rubin
Holland-Doster
Bob Johnston

TECHNOCRATS

RCA Research & Development
(Inventors of the 45 rpm record)
Columbia Records R&D
(Developers of the LP)

INVENTOR OF THE TERM "ROCK AND ROLL"

Alan Freed

CLASSICAL MOONLIGHTERS

Joshua Rifkin
Joseph Byrd
Peter Schickels

DYLAN

FOLK ROCK

The Byrds (alone!)

ART ROCK

Van Dyke Parks
Rolling Stones ('67)
Donovan
The Mothers
The Velvet Underground
Simon and Garfunkel
The Beach Boys ('66 on)
The Doors*
Country Joe and the Fish
Traffic
Jefferson Airplane
Clear Light
Jimi Hendrix*
Procol Harum*
United States of America
Vanilla Fudge*
Chad and Jeremy ('67)
*Mannerist division

JAZZ ROCK

The Free Spirits
Gary Burton Quartet (Larry Coryell)
Jeremy and the Satyrs
The Cream
Loose
Hugh Masekela
Donovan ('68)

COUNTRY ROCK

Roy Orbison
Tom Jones
Bobbie Gentry
Billy Joe Royal
Sandy Poesy
Gene Pittney
Bobby Goldsboro

ERRANT FOLKIES

Judy Collins
Tim Buckley
Janis Ian
Jake Holmes
Phil Ochs
Joan Baez
The Youngbloods
Tim Rose
Tim Hardin
Noel Harrison

Jug-Band Division
Jim Kweskin Jug Band
Lovin' Spoonful (pre-'67)
Nitty Gritty Dirt Band

CROTCH ROCK

The Fugs

SUBTERRANEAN ROCK

The Gods
Pearls Before Swine
The Mystery Trend
The Charlatans
Mad River
Quicksilver Messenger Service
The Group Image
The Third World Raspberry
The Beorn Express
The Druids of Stonehenge

DOGS

Little Nipper
Banana and Louise

THE COMSTOCK OF ROCK

Gordon McLendon

Mapping Pop

Alan Becker

In this series of articles on pop, I have so far discussed the basic line for the analysis of contemporary pop music (NLR 39), and one pop group—the Rolling Stones (NLR 47). However, this procedure, passing from the theoretical preconditions for a study in depth to the work of a single group, is open to the criticism that it has ignored the breadth of pop music and the diversity of the genres included under that rubric. Pop criticism is in such a parlous state that studies in breadth can hardly yet be begun, if they are possible at all. However, the North American rave magazine *Cheetah* has produced a chart that claims to map the field. Rather than producing my own counter-chart, I have chosen to comment on and criticize their chart, which is reproduced with this article, stressing its omissions and mis-allocations, and then to discuss whether such a classificatory technique can replace the study of individual artists and groups.

The Rock Of Ages should include Eddie Cochran, The Crewcuts, The Diamonds, Fats Domino, Frankie Lyman & The Teenagers, Ella Mae Morse, Carl Perkins, Gene Vincent and The Crickets, who were much more than just Buddy Holly's backing group, pioneering the standard beat group instrumentation and style. I would also propose including some more recent artists—The Four Seasons, because of their archetypal schlock classics such as *Sherry Baby*, and Nico whose LP *The Chelsea Girls*, particularly the title track, shows her to be the most important chanteuse since Billie Holiday.

I would also suggest creating a special honorific category for The Yardbirds because they are no longer an important force and because they did so much to open up the British scene (remember *Shapes O' Things*?).

The Rock Of Ages does not contain all the seeds of contemporary developments; often, these various styles are commemorated rather than creatively developed. The major omission from this chart is a documentation of the outside influences that have enriched contemporary rock to such an extent. Firstly, of course, there is the rhythm-and-blues tradition, the most important individuals being Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters (*The Best Of Muddy Waters* is probably the most influential single album in the world), Bo Diddley and BB King, whose work has provided direction for all the most important pop guitarists (Bloomfield, Clapton, Hendrix, etc). For the purposes of this survey we can ignore the purists' divisions between pure and contaminated blues (see for instance Charles Keil: *The Urban Blues*). Secondly, there is the folk tradition in its contemporary form. Thirdly, there is

the very pervasive influence of Ravi Shankar, Ustad Vilayat Khan and company. Fourthly, there is the influence of the 'classical' *avant-garde*—Cage and Stockhausen on The Beatles, La Monte Young on The Velvet Underground. Fifthly, there is the influence of jazz. This is much more complex than the Jazz Rock category in this chart suggests. There is the influence of the contemporary *avant-garde*—the Coltrane group on Vanilla Fudge and others, Ayler and Pharoah Saunders on the tenor player with The Free Spirits, etc—and also the influence of older elements, such as that of the 'vocalese' style on Georgie Fame. There is also an influence the other way, and this chart could include a Rock Jazz category (Gary Burton, Bill Russe, Nisse Sandstrom, etc). And then there is the fact that contemporary pop has provided a new set of 'standards' for today's jazz musicians. Incidentally, there is no quicker way to an appreciation of the vitality and character of the new breed of pop musicians than by listening to the bloodless versions of the new standards that so many jazz musicians are now recording.

The three major individual influences on the contemporary scene are correctly recorded. It should be noted, however, that neither The Beatles nor The Stones have remained transcendent and didactic, and that both have been influenced by other artists on this chart. The two-way interaction between the Stones and the soul tradition should be represented.

It should be noted that the soul tradition stretches back to gospel music, and, to make the chart complete in this area, one should record the decisive influence of Ray Charles whose own music is a synthesis of gospel, blues and Negro popular sentimental ballad. (One recalls Bill Broonzy's consternation upon hearing Charles in a blindfold test:—'He's got the blues, he's cryin' sanctified. He's mixin' the blues with the spirituals. I know that's wrong. . . . He should be singin' in a church.') Charles' was the greatest single achievement in all the art. The geographical and racial divisions in this category do not represent stylistic differences. There is no reason, incidentally, why blue-eyed soul should be inferior to the rest of the music, but it just is. Spencer Davis belongs here rather than in Blues Rock. The most important omission, however, is Booker T & The MG's (Memphis) who reduce the nitty gritty to its basic essentials and present it as it really is.

One notes, in the growing body of rock-criticism, a certain arrogant disregard for this music. While this is not difficult to understand—it is the most stereotyped music on the present scene, conveying the most confused and mystified sentiments (I certainly will not let my children listen to Aretha Franklin)—why this music is found so distasteful would constitute an interesting and important topic for further analysis. The study of soul music also includes the question of the disappearance of the Negro aesthetic from white consciousness. I hope to attempt such an analysis in a future issue, considering the music, not as it is in Detroit or Harlem but as it functions in the metropolitan discothèque.

There is no reason for discriminating between Blues Rock and Rock Blues. *Rock Around The Clock* is an incomprehensible category; I

have never heard The Candyman or The Paupers, but there are no stylistic similarities between the other three. The Who and The Kink are Inimitable British Pop Art Rock. Moby Grape's first record (*Wow*) is very interesting and will be the subject of further discussion. Shock Rock includes all the music we never think of so why include it. The Beegees deserve no special mention . . . unless it is under the heading of Instant Bandwagon Rock, and should go straight to the bottom of this pile.

The Byrds' music incorporates several diverse influences so it cannot be categorized as folk-rock. Tim Rose and Janis Ian, the latter a most original artist and only 17 years old, are more representative here. In the terms of this chart, The Byrds belong with Art Rock. This is not a coherent stylistic category, as it incorporates groups from very different traditions, Hendrix from rhythm-and-blues, The Jefferson Airplane from folk-and-Dylan, and so on. It simply includes all the groups with pretensions that cannot easily be fitted in anywhere else in this chart. Nor is it a coherent evaluative category. It includes some groups who have achieved real development and accomplishment (Velvet Underground, Procul Harum, Vanilla Fudge), some groups of ambivalent status (Country Joe & The Fish, The Mothers, Hendrix) and some pretentious rubbish (Simon & Garfunkel). The pejorative subcategory 'mannerist division' is a mistake. Hendrix may indeed be criticized as mannerist because he purports to be something else—a free-swinging organic effusion—but The Procul Harum and Vanilla Fudge work with 'mannerism' in different ways and consciously so that to criticize them for this is to miss the point of their music.

The Fugs' greatness wins a special category for them, though it should be noted that they are not unique in terms of basic instrumental style. In most cases, the only thing that separates Art Rock and Subterranean Rock is the presence or absence of recording contracts and bookings, and the size of the audience. The only groups I have heard in the latter category are the first two, but we can presume that all are similar to our own groups such as The Human Host & The Heavy Metal Kids, The Four Hundred Rabbits, The Saints Out Of Earth Déjeuner Sur L'Herbe, The Black Beam and Second Run Grade F Shit. All these groups will form the subject of a subsequent article.

Rock Candy contains all the unpretentious, jolly, white groups, often with a strong teenage orientation. Once we have dispensed with all fallacies concerning intention in art, we can see that some of the most important music in the area comes from the best of these people particularly from The Beach Boys and the one important group that is not included here, The Small Faces. The best of this music is in no way inferior to anything in the Art Rock category.

In general, we must conclude that this chart is unsatisfactory in that it does not sort the groups into coherent stylistic categories. Even if it did, and even if this were possible, given the wealth of diverse influences and cross-relations at work, one could question the value of such inert classification. The consideration of what particular artists have made of their history is surely the much more valuable exercise.

Problems of Communist History

We are today at the end of that historical epoch in the development of socialism which began with the collapse of the Second International in 1914 and the victory of the Bolsheviks in October 1917. This is therefore a suitable time to survey the history of the Communist Parties which were the characteristic and dominant forms of the revolutionary movement in this era. The task is difficult because Communist Party historiography has special complications, which will be considered below in connection with James Klugmann's regrettable failure to overcome them,¹ but also for wider reasons.

Each Communist Party was the child of the marriage of two ill-assorted partners, the national left and the October Revolution. That marriage was based both on love and convenience. For anyone whose political memories go back no further than Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, or the Sino-Soviet split, it is almost impossible to conceive what the October Revolution meant to those who are now middle-aged and old. It was the first proletarian revolution, the first régime

in history to set about the construction of the socialist order, the proof both of the profundity of the contradictions of capitalism, which produced wars and slumps, and of the possibility—the *certainly*—the socialist revolution would succeed. It was the beginning of world revolution. It was the beginning of the new world. Only the naïve believed that Russia was the workers' paradise, but even among the sophisticated it enjoyed the general indulgence which the left of the 1960's now gives only to revolutionary regimes in some small countries, such as Cuba and Vietnam. At the same time the decision of revolutionaries in other countries to adopt the Bolshevik model of organization, to subordinate themselves to a Bolshevik International (i.e. eventually to the CPSU and Stalin), was due not only to naïve enthusiasm, but also to the evident failure of all alternative forms of organization, strategy and tactics. Social democracy and anarcho-syndicalism had failed, while Lenin had succeeded. It seemed sensible to follow the recipe of success.

The element of rational calculation increasingly prevailed, after the ebbing of what had, in the years after 1917, looked like the tide of global revolution. It is, of course, almost impossible to separate it in practice from the passionate and total loyalty which individual Communists felt to their cause, which was equated with their Party, which in turn meant loyalty to the Communist International and the USSR (i.e. Stalin). Still, whatever their private feelings, it soon became clear that separation from the Communist Party, whether by expulsion or secession, meant an end to effective revolutionary activity. Bolshevism in the Comintern period did not produce schisms and heresies of practical importance, except in a few remote countries of small global significance, such as Ceylon. Those who left the Party were forgotten or ineffective, unless they rejoined the 'reformists' or went into some overtly 'bourgeois' group, in which case they were no longer of interest to revolutionaries, or unless they wrote books which might or might not become influential on the left some thirty years later. The real history of Trotskyism as a political trend in the international communist movement is posthumous. The strongest among such exiled Marxists worked quietly in isolation until times changed, the weakest broke under the strain and turned passionately anti-communist, to supply the CIA culture of the 1950's with several militants. The average retreated into the hard shell of sectarianism. The communist movement was not effectively split. Still, it paid a price for its cohesion: a substantial, sometimes an enormous, turnover of members. The joke about the largest party being that of the ex-Communists has a basis in fact.

The discovery that Communists had little choice about their loyalty to Stalin and the USSR was first made—though perhaps only at the highest levels of the parties—in the middle 1920's. Clear-sighted and unusually strong-minded Communist leaders like Palmiro Togliatti soon realized that they could not, *in the interest of their national movement*, afford to oppose whoever came out on top in the CPSU, and tried to

¹ James Kingman, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain: Formation and early years*. Vol. I 1919-24. Lawrence & Wishart, 381 pp., 63s.

explain this to those less in touch with the Moscow scene, such as Gramsci. (Of course even a total willingness to go along with Stalin was no guarantee of political, or for residents of the ussa physical, survival in the 1930's.) Under the circumstances loyalty to Moscow ceased to depend on approval of the Moscow line, but became an operational necessity. That most Communists also tried to rationalize this by proving to themselves that Moscow was right at all times is another matter, though it is relevant to the argument, because it confirmed the clear-headed minority in the belief that they would never be able to take their parties with them against Moscow. A British Communist who attended the meeting of the leadership in September 1939 which was told that the war was not, after all, supposed to be a people's anti-fascist war but just an imperialist one, recalls saying to himself: 'That's it. There's nothing to be done. An imperialist war it is.' He was right at the time. Nobody bucked Moscow successfully until Tito carried his party against Stalin in 1948—to Stalin's and a lot of other party leaders' surprise. Still, he was by then not only a leader of a party but also of a nation and a State.

There was, of course, another factor involved: internationalism. Today, when the international Communist movement has largely ceased to exist as such, it is hard to recapture the immense strength which its members drew from the consciousness of being soldiers in a single international army, operating, with whatever tactical multiformity and flexibility, a single grand strategy of world revolution. Hence the impossibility of any fundamental or long-term conflict between the interest of a national movement and the International, which was the *real* Party, of which the national units were no more than disciplined sections. That strength was based both on realistic argument and moral conviction. What convinced in Lenin was not so much his socio-economic analysis—after all, at a pinch something like his theory of imperialism can be derived from earlier Marxist writings—but his palpable genius for organizing a revolutionary party and mastering the tactics and strategy of making revolution. At the same time the Comintern was intended to, and very largely did, give the movement immunity against the terrible collapse of its ideals.

Communists, it was agreed, would never behave like international social democracy in 1914, abandoning its flag to follow the banners of nationalism, into mutual massacre. And, it must be said, they did not. There is something heroic about the British and French cps in September 1939. Nationalism, political calculation, even common sense, pulled one way, yet they unhesitatingly chose to put the interests of the international movement first. As it happens, they were tragically and absurdly wrong. But their error, or rather that of the Soviet line of the moment, and the politically absurd assumption in Moscow that a given international situation implied the same reactions by very differently situated parties, should not lead us to ridicule the spirit of their action. This is how the socialists of Europe should have acted in 1914 and did not: carrying out the decisions of their International. This is how the Communists did act when another world war broke out. It was not their fault that the International should have told them to do something else.

The problem of those who write the history of Communist parties therefore unusually difficult. They must recapture the unique and among secular movements, unprecedented *temper* of Bolshevism equally remote from the liberalism of most historians and the permissive and self-indulgent activism of most contemporary ultra-There is no understanding it without a grasp of that sense of total devotion which made the Party in Auschwitz make its members pay their dues in cigarettes (inconceivably precious and almost impossible to obtain in an extermination camp), which made the cadres accept the order not merely to kill Germans in occupied Paris, but first to acquire individually, the arms to do so, and which made it virtually unthinkable for them to refuse to return to Moscow even to certain imprisonment or death. There is no understanding either the achievements or the perversions of Bolshevism without this, and both have been monumental; and certainly no understanding of the extraordinary success of Communism as a system of education for political work.

But the historians must also separate the national elements within Communist parties from the international, including those current within national movements which carried out the international line not because they had to, but because they were in genuine agreement with it. They must separate the genuinely international elements in Comintern policy from those which reflected only the state interests of the USSR or the tactical or other pre-occupations of Soviet internal politics. In both national and international policies they must distinguish between those based on knowledge, ignorance or hunch, on Marxist analysis (good or bad), on local tradition, the imitation of suitable or unsuitable foreign examples, or sheer trial and error, tactical insight or ideological formula. They must, above all, make up their mind which policies were successful and sensible and which were neither, resisting the temptation to dismiss the Comintern en bloc as a failure or Russian puppet show.

These problems are particularly difficult for the historian of the British CP because, except for a few brief periods, they appear to be so unimportant in this country. The party was both entirely loyal to Moscow, entirely unwilling to involve itself in Russian or international controversies, and an unquestioned chip off the native working-class block. Its path was not littered with lost or expelled leaders, heresies and deviations. Admittedly it enjoyed the advantage of smallness which meant that the International did not expect the spectacular results which put such a strain on, say, the German party, and of operating in a country which, even on the most cursory inspection, was unlike most of Europe and the other continents. Being the child, not of a political split in social-democracy, but of the unification of the various groups of the extreme left, which had always operated to some extent outside the Labour Party, it could not be plausibly regarded as an alternative mass party to Labour, at least an immediate alternative. Hence it was left free—indeed it was generally encouraged—to pursue the tasks to which militant British left wingers would have devoted themselves anyway, and because they were Communists, to do so with unusual self-abnegation and efficiency. Indeed initially Lenin was

chiefly concerned to discourage the sectarianism and hostility to Labour, to which the native ultra-Left was spontaneously drawn. The periods when the international line went against the grain of the national left wing strategy and tactics (as in 1928-34 and 1939-41) stand out as anomalies in the history of British Communism, just because there was so obviously—as there was not in all other countries—such a strategy. So long as there was no realistic prospect of revolution, there was only one ruc and the Labour Party was the only—and still growing—party likely to win the support of the politically conscious workers on a national scale, in practice there was only one realistically conceivable road of socialist advance. The disarray of the Left today (inside and outside the Labour Party) is due largely to the fact that these things can no longer be taken for granted and that there are no generally accepted alternative strategies.

Nevertheless, this apparent simplicity of the British communists' situation conceals a number of questions. In the first place, what exactly did the International expect of the British, other than they they should turn themselves into a proper Communist Party, and—from a not entirely certain date—that they should assist the Communist movements in the Empire? What precisely was the role of Britain in its general strategy and how did it change? This is by no means clear from the existing historical literature, which is admittedly (apart from Macfarlane's book) not of high quality.²

In the second place, why was the impact of the CP in the 1920's so modest, even by unexacting standards? Its membership was tiny and fluctuating, its successes the reflection partly of the radical and militant mood of the Labour movement, partly of the fact that Communists still operated largely within the Labour Party or at least with its local support. Not until the 1930's did the CP become, in spite of its modest but growing membership, its electoral weakness and the systematic hostility of the Labour leadership, the effective national left.

Thirdly, what was the base of Communist support? Why did it fail, again before the 1930's, to attract any significant body of support among intellectuals, and rapidly shed most of the relatively few it attracted (mostly from the ex-Fabian and Guild Socialist left)? What was the nature of its unusually strong influence—though not necessarily membership—in Scotland and Wales? What happened in the 1930's to turn the party into what it had not previously been, a body of factory militants?

And, of course, there are all the questions which will inevitably be asked about the rightness or wrongness of the party's changing line, and more fundamentally, of this particular type of organization in the context of inter-war and post-1945 Britain.

James Klugmann has not seriously tackled any of them. This extremely able and lucid man is clearly capable of writing a satisfactory

² L. J. Macfarlane: *The British Communist Party: Its Origin and Development until 1929*. Macgibbon and Kee, 1966, 63s.

history of the Communist Party, and where he feels unconstrained, he does so. Thus he provides the best and clearest account of the formation of the party at present available. Unfortunately he is paralysed by the impossibility of being both a good historian and a loyal functionary. The only way yet discovered to write a public 'official' history of an organization is to hand the material over to one or more professional historians who are sufficiently in sympathy not to do a hatchet job, sufficiently uninvolved not to mind opening cupboards for fear of possible skeletons, and who can, if the worst come to the worst, be officially disavowed. That is, essentially, what the British government did with the official history of the Second World War, and the result has been that Webster and Frankland were able to produce a history of the air war which destroys many familiar myths and treads on many service and political toes, but is both scholarly and useful—not least to anyone who wishes to judge or plan strategy. The Italian CP is the only one which has so far chosen this sensible, but to most politicians almost unthinkable, course. Paolo Spriano has therefore been able to write a debatable, but serious and scholarly work.³ James Klugman has been able to do neither. He has merely used his considerable gifts to avoid writing a disreputable one.

In doing so he has, I am afraid, wasted much of his time. What, after all, is the use of spending ten years on the sources—including those in Moscow—when the *only* precise references to contemporary unpublished CP sources—give or take one or two—appear to number seven and the *only* references even to printed Communist International sources (including *Inprecorr*) number less than a dozen in a volume of 370 pages. The rest are substantially references to the published reports, pamphlets and especially periodicals of the CP in this period. In 1921–2 the Presidium of the Comintern discussed Britain 13 times—more often than any country other than the French, Italian, Hungarian and German parties. One would not have known it from Klugmann's book, whose index lacks all reference to Zinoviev (except in connection with the forged letter bearing his name), Borodin, Petrovsky-Bennet or, for that matter, so purely British a field of party activity as the Labour Research Department.

An adequate history of the CP cannot be written by systematically avoiding or fudging genuinely controversial issues and matter likely to be regarded as indiscreet or bad public relations within the organization. It cannot even be offset by describing and documenting, more fully than ever before, the activities of the militants. It is interesting to have 160 or so pages on the party's work from 1920 to 1923, but the basic fact about this period is that recorded in Zinoviev's Report to the 4th World Congress at the end of 1922, namely that 'In no other country, perhaps, does the Communist movement make such slow progress', and this fact is not really faced. Even the popular contemporary explanation that this was due to mass unemployment is not seriously discussed. In brief, Klugmann has done some justice to the devoted and often forgotten militants who served the British working

³ Paolo Spriano: *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano* vol. 1, *Da Bordighi a Gramsci* Einaudi, 1967, 4000 lire.

class as best they knew how. He has written a textbook for their successors in party schools, with all the clarity and ability which have made his high reputation as a teacher in such courses. He has provided a fair amount of new information, some of which will only be recognized by the very expert at deciphering careful formulations, and little of which—on important matters—is documented.

But he has neither written a satisfactory history of the CP nor of the role of the CP in British politics. And if he applies the same methods to volume 2, where the 'controversial issues' become less easily avoidable, he will produce an even more disappointing book.

Fred Halliday

Rethinking the Middle East

For Marxists, using a theory that began as an analysis of capitalist society, precapitalist and colonial societies have presented a dual, dialectically interrelated problematic: problems of the theoretical analysis of such societies, and problems of revolutionary strategy in the colonial societies—where Marxists have too often been guided by globalized schemes rather than applied genuinely Marxist criteria to differentiated social systems.

The works of Marx on precapitalist societies are on a level of considerable generality, and are concerned above all with the historical preconditions for the emergence of capitalism, and with the periodicity of history from tribalism to the modern age. In this sense, they are not so helpful for analysing societies that have failed to develop capitalism but have existed in a world where capitalism has developed and are therefore exposed to destructive forces unknown to precapitalist Europe.¹ Marx's scattered writings on colonial societies, particularly his writings on India, assume that capitalism will simultaneously destroy oriental society and create capitalism instead.² Faced with the short history of the British impact on India, he failed to see that capitalism simultaneously destroys existing social structures and prevents these societies from developing along the capitalist path. When considering the British impact on Ireland, which had continued over eight centuries, Engels *was* able to see what is now the basis of any analysis of the third world—that the impact of imperialism is essentially destructive and leads to a process of economic involution and social disruption.³

Nevertheless, a Marxist theory of the societies of Africa, Asia and Latin America is not only a possibility but a necessity for the national liberation movement, and for combatting imperialist social science as

¹ *Pre-Capitalist Formations*, introduced by Eric Hobsbawm. Lawrence and Wishart, 1964.

² See particularly his articles 'The British Rule in India' and 'The Future Results of the British Rule in India'. For a discussion of Marx on India, see V. G. Kiernan, 'Marx and India', in *Socialist Register* 1967.

³ See Marx and Engels, *On Colonialism*, p. 334.

propagated in the universities of Britain and America.⁴ These two recent works, by Maxime Rodinson and Anouar Abdel-Malek,⁵ are important contributions to a Marxist analysis of the Middle East, an area where the national liberation movement is in considerable confusion as to the nature of the societies it is confronting.

The central historical problem that is posed in analysing the Middle East is the failure of Muslim society to resist western capitalism and the effects of this failure on subsequent history. This failure began with the Ottoman expulsion from Hungary in 1687, and from that time on the disruptive impact of Europe spread throughout Muslim society. Military defeat was followed by an economic invasion and the 'industrial infanticide' that was the global effect of capitalist expansion. Local handicrafts were destroyed; production was geared to the European market; the result was political, social and cultural underdevelopment.

In the Middle East, this enabled the West to occupy strategic areas, unload an unassimilable Jewish minority onto Palestine, and pillage the oil resources of the region. This involution has prevented Arab, Persian or Turkish societies from combatting the destructive impact of imperialism, and from being able to use existing resources to deal with the problems they face. The result is the induced confusion of Middle Eastern politics today—Palestine, military-terrorist régimes, rural overpopulation, Islamic fanaticism, hysteria, sheikhly reaction, Arab balkanization.

From the 17th, but particularly from the 19th, century onwards Middle Eastern societies were unable to resist European capitalism with an indigenous capitalism or with an alternative form of state capitalism. The classic answer to this weakness of Middle Eastern society is that of vulgar Weberianism: the Middle East was prevented by Islam from developing capitalism. This mechanistic belief in the autonomous force of Islam is today also found in the theory that Islam is a bastion against communism, one of the more absurd tenets of neocolonial orientalism.

The purpose of Maxime Rodinson's work is to show with a vast range of erudition and acquaintance with Muslim civilization over 13 centuries that Islam, far from impeding a native capitalism, was in no way responsible for the failure of the Middle East to provide a countervailing Muslim capitalism to that of Europe. His central analysis is divided into a study of Muslim theory and its relation to capitalism.

⁴ The vast output of political science literature concerned with the third world, usually located under the rubric 'comparative politics', has contributed greatly to fostering the myths of imperialism: the theories of 'modernization', where modernity is defined in terms of an ideal United States, have served to mask both the historical roots of the economic and political contradictions of the third world, and the present depressive force exerted by imperialism on these countries. Andre Gunder Frank has proposed a diametrically opposed problematic which if implemented would serve to re-establish the analysis of the third world on a scientific basis; he has advocated a 'historical, holistic and structural approach': 'The Development of Underdevelopment', *Monthly Review*, September 1966.

⁵ *Islam et Capitalisme*, Maxime Rodinson, Editions du Seuil, 1966. *Egypt: Military Society*, Anouar Abdel-Malek, Random House, 1968.

and a study of Muslim practice and the presence in Muslim society of a flourishing capitalist sector.

On the theoretical level, the doctrinal proscriptions of the Koran did not exclude commercial activity. There are in the Koran, and in the subsequent hadith (sayings attributed to Mohammad but mostly apocryphal), injunctions to charity for those who are rich: the duty of *zakat*, alms, is one of the five duties of every Muslim. Certain kinds of profit, *riba*, were condemned, but neither in theory nor practice did Islam exclude commercial activity. The Middle East in the 11th to 14th centuries had a flourishing commercial and financial apparatus that surpassed that of Europe. Artisans engaged in productive activity were able to hire proletarians to work in their workshops; during the rise of the commercial bourgeoisie under the early Abbasids (after 750), many hadith were attributed to Mohammad in which commercial activity was explicitly praised and encouraged—for example 'Merchants are the messengers of this world and trustees of God upon earth'. At this period Islam, far from impeding capitalism, served to articulate the values of a nascent capitalist class.

The existence of a capitalist sector within a non-capitalist socio-economic formation was understood by Marx and Engels in analyses of ancient Rome and of mediaeval Europe; indeed the existence of such a sector, with free investment capital, was a precondition for the emergence of capitalism. This sector existed in mediaeval Islam, but it failed to produce a capitalist social formation as it developed in Europe. Two questions are posed by this: first the nature of the socio-economic formation in mediaeval Islam, in particular the relation of mediaeval Islamic society to Marx's theory of oriental despotism; secondly, the failure of this capitalist sector to develop, as happened in Europe.

Rodinson's position on this first topic rests on a distinction between a mode of production and a socio-economic formation, so that a mode of production may not necessarily determine the socio-economic formation within which it is inserted.⁶ Marx distinguished oriental despotism and feudalism as two alternative socio-economic formations; Lenin, Stalin and the world communist movement tended to postulate a universal feudalism as the stage of development characterizing those societies that had not reached capitalism. Rodinson's distinction of mode and formation is an attempt to escape from both these formulations, since he argues that in the mediaeval Islam there were a whole series of modes of production: slavery, autonomous village communities on the model of Marx's oriental despotism, large landowners with serfs on the model of Feudal Europe—all existed at various periods. Rodinson argues: 'The economic system on which the Muslim society of the Middle Ages rested varied with time and place. One can say that it consisted in the co-ordination of different modes of production'. If this analysis is correct, there was no one socio-economic formation in the Muslim societies. The mixture of different modes of production meant that no one mode dominated and became the constitutive mode.

⁶ *Islam et Capitalisme*, pp. 73–83. See also his review of *Pre-Capitalist Formations* in NLR 35.

Under capitalism and European feudalism one mode became the constitutive mode with a corresponding formation. The variety of the Middle East prevented any such analogous relation between mode and formation.

The question of the collapse of this capitalism is not discussed by Rodinson in any detail; he suggests a few possible causes—density of population, centralized States, invasions from Central Asia—but the contribution his book makes to the central historical issue is above all that of eliminating the vulgar Weberian analysis based on the tenets and imagined practices of Islam and of providing an analysis of Islam based on an economic and historical understanding of Muslim society.

The role of Islam in subsequent Arab politics has been extremely important, and cannot be discussed here. One can, however, show that the fate of capitalism in Egypt was conditioned by material factors and that the form taken by Islam, whether popular or intellectual, was the result of these material forces. The experience of Japan showed that it was possible for a non-European country to industrialize, provide certain prior conditions were satisfied. Chief among these was the changeover to a capitalist agriculture, the transfer of the rural surplus into industrial investment, a centralized State, and the political power to keep out foreign competitors. In Egypt these conditions were satisfied under the rule of Mohammad Ali (1803–48). The achievements of Mohammad Ali could have led to the industrialization of Egypt: he seized all land, massacred the landowning Mameluke class, began the commercial production of cotton for export, controlled the sale of cotton, and instituted an industrial sector. The preconditions for independent political and economic existence were created; but subsequent opening of Egypt to free trade, the transfer of land to a landowning class and the influx of foreign finance turned Egypt by 1880 into a semi-colony which the British were able to occupy at will.

Anouar Abdel-Malek's book is an attempt to examine the Nasserist régime, and its relation to Egypt's past.⁷ The English edition which has now appeared is a revised edition of the French edition of 1962—though certain invalid predictions have not been removed, and he has tended to add bits onto the end of his narrative rather than integrate new material into the text. His narrative is extremely well documented and he draws on much material unavailable to the western reader. But the central virtue of his book is that it represents the culmination of over twenty-five years of Marxist theoretical development in Egypt, by Egyptians analysing their own society. As Rodinson wrote when reviewing the first edition of this work, it represents 'a once the fulfilment and the transcending' of the native Egyptian Marxism of the post-war period.⁸

Both the benefits and the faults of this Marxism can be seen in Abdel Malek's work. For those who have seen in Nasserism an alternative form of economic transformation to that of communism, but one which

⁷ Other writings in English of Abdel-Malek's include 'Nasserism and Socialism' in *Socialist Register* 1964, and 'Crisis in Nasser's Egypt' *ibid.* 45.

⁸ 'L'Egypte Nasserienne au miroir marxiste', *Les Temps Modernes*, April 1963.

is at the same time based on an anti-imperialist foreign policy, a Marxist political and economic analysis can only show the falsity of any such hopes. Between Suez and the collapse of the Syrian-Egyptian union in 1961, various observers put their hopes on Nasser. American sociologists and political scientists saw in the military the 'new men', the modern equivalent of the heroic European entrepreneurs, who would 'modernise' their country. In Latin America, various idealist hopes were placed on the efficacy of *nasserismo*.⁹ The defeat of June 1967 and the subsequent revelations about corruption and inefficiency have shown to the outside world what Egyptians already knew: that in spite of the anti-imperialist stand of its leadership, the obvious sincerity and honesty of Nasser himself, and certain spectacular economic achievements such as the Aswan Dam, the present régime has been totally unable to meet the basic economic problems of Egypt or to carry out the political prerequisites for social transformation.

The coup of July 1952 was carried out by a tiny group of conspirators. Without a social base at first, it gradually expanded and fused itself with the former rich: the landowners had to give up some of their land, and it was redistributed among rich peasants, civil servants and army officers. By 1963 80 per cent of Egyptian industry was State-owned, but the result of this was the emergence of a new salariat parasitic on the nationalized industry. The analyses of Abdel-Malek concerning the new class in Egypt, and its essentially parasitic role, have been confirmed by other authors, notably by Hassan Riad and Hossam Issa.¹⁰ The crisis of the rural areas, where the mass of landless peasantry has been increasing and getting poorer since 1914, had not been solved by the land reform, which merely redistributed the land among a wider ruling class.

Abdel-Malek's account of the emergence of this new class, and Nasser's changing relations with the bourgeoisie and the landowning class, is excellent. But certain of his political judgements derive from a misleading analysis of the past and future of the Egyptian left. His account of the years before the coup, 1945-52, present a situation in which the left was near to seizing power through its relation to the unions and through its attempts at a transformation of the anti-British guerrillas into peasant revolutionaries; the burning of Cairo in January 1952 served as an excuse for imperialism and the rich to arrest the left, and the result was that '... the Egyptian people lost its revolution'.¹¹ The optimism which this analysis suggests does not accurately describe a situation where a powerful ruling class, backed by the British, was faced by a left that consisted mainly of intellectuals and which had itself to contend with the organized masses of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The optimistic analysis is sustained up to the present; Abdel-Malek considers that the military régime has now created the preconditions for a socialist development by abolishing the previous power-structure.

⁹ See José Nun, 'The Middle Class Military Coup', in Claudio Véliz (ed.) *The Politics of Conformity in Latin America*.

¹⁰ Hassan Riad, *L'Égypte Nasserienne*, Paris 1964; and Hossam Issa, 'Les Nouveaux Nantis', *Démocratie Nouvelle*, February 1968.

¹¹ *Egypt: Military Society*, p. 37.

There is, he says, 'an objectively valid point of departure for a future development in the direction of socialism'.¹² A scientific analysis of Egyptian society, of the kind he himself has carried out, will demonstrate that a new ruling class has emerged. Lacking either a socialist ideology, or an effective socialist party, the régime is unable to transform itself from within; Nasser's periodic attempts to attack corruption, or to institute discussion and political participation, have no meaning in the face of an entrenched state bourgeoisie, which is in control of land, industry and the army. The rural masses, who have suffered the effects of over 100 years of colonialism and cumulative exploitation, play no political role. 80 per cent of them are now landless. Similarly, the urban working class, a relatively privileged group in relation to rural workers, are excluded from political decision. Those at Helouan who did protest after the June defeat, and pointed quite correctly to the responsibility of the ruling class, have not been able to develop their protest into a permanent form of political organization.

The only possibility for Egypt lies in a political movement *against* the existing régime. Without the elimination of the state bourgeoisie as a political force there will be no solution to Egypt's rural crisis, and no political change that will enable Egypt to achieve a level of efficiency adequate to military activities against Israel or to social transformation. The rural masses have a long tradition of insurgency but the dense population makes a successful rural movement unlikely. The intellectuals have been either driven into exile or have conceded to repression and been organically integrated into the military State. The worker and the great mass of urban un- and semi-employed have acted up to now in a sporadic manner, often expressing their hostility to imperialism and the government in the form of Islamic traditionalism. Islam which in its first centuries reflected an expanding and successful society has become the reflection of a society in decline, under constant attack from the West and unable to cope with the threats presented to it. As the ideology of a despairing and exploited urban mass, it now represents a serious obstacle to the spread of socialism among the Muslim masses while it is itself totally incapable of providing the theoretical guidance to a movement that could resolve the contradictions of modern Arab societies.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 371.

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British capitalism has long exported its violence to its imperial possessions: it does so in full measure to its nearest vassal territory—the police state which it maintains in Northern Ireland. Irish workers and peasants have, however, a revolutionary heritage, both of class struggle and of combat against British imperialism. This tradition has powered the civil rights association in the North, a movement whose radical component—People's Democracy—is attempting to transform a sectional fight for elementary civic rights on the part of the Catholic population into a class assault of both Protestant and Catholic workers, peasants and students against their exploiters. Such a development threatens not merely the maintenance in power of the Northern Irish client régime—it menaces the equally reactionary 'independent' régime in the South.

The struggle in Northern Ireland has attained a higher level than on the English mainland. The Left here has traditionally failed to win any important section of the working class to anti-imperialist positions, even where it is subjectively anti-capitalist. The situation in Northern Ireland highlights the urgency of doing so. If effective solidarity action is to be achieved, a considerable work of propaganda and demystification in Britain will be needed. This issue begins with a fraternal discussion of tactics and strategy in Northern Ireland with leading comrades of the People's Democracy. This is followed by an article by Peter Gibbon which analyses the interplay of religion and class in Northern Ireland today, in the light of Irish history since colonization.

Almost three years ago, in NLR 41, we published Louis Althusser's 'Contradiction and Over-determination'. Now his two most important books, 'For Marx' and 'Reading Capital', are scheduled for publication in Britain, and the significance of his work is beginning to be appreciated in the English-speaking countries. In this issue we are publishing Althusser's essay on Freud and Lacan. Originally written in polemic against vulgar denigrations of Freud and of psychoanalysis, it is perhaps the best Marxist theorization of psychoanalysis that has ever been written—one that recaptures with virulent force the intellectual upheaval of Freud's discovery.

The upsurge of revolutionary activity during the last couple of years in Europe has led to a great renewal of interest in the revolutionary year which stretched from October 1917 through the early twenties. In NLR 51 we printed a selection of Gramsci's articles on the Italian factory councils of 1919-20. In this issue we publish a document by Mikhail Tukhachevsky, with an introduction on the crucial Polish campaign of 1920 which so largely determined the relation of the October revolution to the Central and Western European theatres of the revolution. In future numbers we plan to publish articles and documents on the German revolution and on the Hungarian Commune after the First World War.

The Communists and Peace

Jean-Paul Sartre

Much has been written about last year's events in France, but nothing as yet so crucial to modern Marxist thought as this book. *Les Communistes et la Paix* was stimulated by the Communist demonstrations in Paris in the Summer of 1952. It contains Sartre's most incisive analysis of the future of the organized Marxist movement and of the dialectical relationship between the proletariat and the Communist Party.

With 'An Answer to Claude Lefort' (a prominent liberal critic) this work is as important now (perhaps more) as when it was first published in *Les Temps Modernes*.

42s.

HAMISH HAMILTON

This interview with leading members of People's Democracy took place in Derry on the evening of April 20 1969, as the crisis which was finally to unseat O'Neill opened. Three days previously, Bernadette Devlin had been elected in Mid-Ulster. On the previous evening, a march through Burntollet had been banned, and a protest in Derry had exploded into a full-scale confrontation between the police and the Catholic working class. The participants in this interview are:- Liam Baxter, 23, student and member of Queen's University RSSF; Bernadette Devlin, 22, student at Queen's and now an M.P.; Mike Farrell, 25, technical college lecturer and member of the executive of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association; Eamonn McCann, 26, unemployed and member of the Derry Young Socialists; Cyril Taman, 26, technical college lecturer. Apart from Liam Baxter, all the participants stood for PD in the Stormont elections.

People's Democracy: a Discussion on Strategy

How did the Civil Rights movement and People's Democracy start and what is their relationship to each other?

Farrell. Formally the Civil Rights Association has been going for about two years and was conceived by its founders as an all-party organization similar to the National Council for Civil Liberties in England. It went out of its way, for example, to ensure that there was a pet Unionist on its executive. The tendency which wants to keep the CRA as a broad class-collaborating organization still remains within it.

McCann. The CRA behaved in the manner of all such organizations: it did nothing except issue press statements calling on the Unionist Government to be a bit more liberal. Then in August 1968 a number of people in Dungannon decided to have a Civil Rights march to protest over the allocation of housing in that area.

They invited the CRA, as the relevant organization, to lead the march, which it did. The march was stopped by Craig and the Paisleyites. After Dungannon some of us decided to have a Civil Rights march in Derry on October 5th. That march met with the most appalling and partisan brutality on the part of the police. The Civil Rights ~~movement~~ began then, and the CRA has been swamped in the movement.

People's Democracy began as a result of the police behaviour in Derry on October 5th. A number of Queens University students who were among the Civil Rights marchers went back to Belfast and organized a march there in protest against the police brutality. That march was also stopped and the students returned to the University somewhat demoralized and very confused. They began talking about what they should do and PD emerged from that discussion.

Farrell. But PD is not just part of the Civil Rights movement, it is a revolutionary association. Its formation was considerably influenced by the Sorbonne Assembly and by concepts of libertarianism as well as socialism. It has adopted a very democratic type of structure; there is no formal membership and all meetings are open. At the moment this structure is not working very satisfactorily, and I think it will be necessary, within the overall framework, to find a way of introducing a little more co-ordination. I had hoped that the PD would realise the necessity of taking a stand on class issues, and would therefore transform itself into a broadly socialist body, though a non-sectarian one in which socialists of several different tendencies could co-operate. I no longer think this will happen of its own accord. There have recently been some sharp disagreements within PD and differences have arisen between socialists and an alliance of anarchists and right wingers.

Had the militants in PD worked together before it was formed?

Farrell. The people who were batoned in Derry on October 5th and who were involved in the subsequent formation of PD were mainly members of the Young Socialist Alliance. They travelled to Derry together as the Young Socialist Alliance, which at that time was about 30 or 40 strong and consisted of students and recent graduates of Queens, and they were responsible for the subsequent protest in Belfast. So right from the start the Young Socialist Alliance was the core of Peoples' Democracy. It involved three of the people who are here now.

Your central demands appear at first sight to be reformist—one man, one job and one family, one house. Why have you focussed on these specific issues?

McCann. Because the transformation of Irish society necessary to implement these reforms is a revolution. We are definitely in a pre revolutionary situation in the north. The Unionist Party must give something to the pope-heads of Derry to get them off the streets, but if they give them anything the Unionist party will break up. So by supporting these demands in a militant manner, we are supporting class demands and we are striking hard against the ruling political party.

Farrell. Our general strategy in the past was that we should enter into

the Civil Rights movement in order to participate in the mobilization and radicalization of the Catholic working class, and to radicalize the civil rights demands themselves. We should now move forward in two ways. 1. We should complete the ideological development of the Catholic working class 2. We should develop concrete agitational work over housing and jobs to show the class interests of both Catholics and Protestants. We have delayed far too long trying to develop the ideology of the Catholic working class and agitating on specific class issues. It is certainly now time that People's Democracy became an organization capable of carrying out this agitational work, for example, producing leaflets and—more important—a paper which carries analyses of that situation. If PD can't do this then it is time for the socialists in the PD and in the Civil Rights movement to form a direct socialist organization.

McCann. In fact we have failed to get our position across. We keep saying parrot-like that we are fighting on working-class issues for working-class unity, that our objective is a workers' and farmers' socialist republic. But when you say to the people in the Bogside area in Derry that they are being exploited because they are workers not because they are Catholics, they are not very inclined to believe you. All their lives they have been told by the Unionist Party that this is a Protestant state for Protestant people, and that pope-heads will be beaten into the ground if they dare to open their mouths. Moreover a number of jumped up opportunist nationalist politicians who have been the only means of expression of Catholic discontent, have accepted the Unionist perspective, and have deepened the religious divide. The consciousness of the people is still most definitely sectarian. The reason that we have failed to get our position across is that we have failed to fight any sort of political struggle *within* the Civil Rights movement, and the reason for that is that as revolutionary socialists we have been used, through the years, like revolutionary socialists in England, to talking to tens of people. Now suddenly, since October the 5th, we have found that we have an audience listening to us and applauding us, of tens of thousands of people. We got carried away by this, and submerging the Young Socialist Alliance in the PD; we submerged our politics into the Civil Rights movement. All that we managed to get across was that we were more extreme than the Civil Rights people. We have never made it clear that this difference in militancy stemmed from a political difference, we never made it clear why we were more militant; and the reason for that, I believe, is that we have been frightened of scaring off our mass audience. We thought that we had to keep these people, bring them along, educate and radicalize them. It was a lot of pompous nonsense and we failed absolutely to change the consciousness of the people. The consciousness of the people who are fighting in the streets at the moment is sectarian and bigoted.

Yet you have taken a principled position on the religious issue and have won a considerable following. Do you think you have failed to break the grip of sectarianism even over the Catholics who support you?

Farrell. We have radicalized the Catholic working class to quite a considerable extent, and in some degree got across to them the necessity of

non-sectarianism and even the fact that their Protestant fellow worker is almost as much exploited as they are. But we have failed to get across at all to the *Protestant* working class. So there is now a more radicalized Catholic working class, whilst the Protestant proletariat is still as remote and inert as ever.

McCann. I think this assessment is very wrong. Yesterday in Derry, after Catholic workers became enraged by the Paisleyites waving the Union Jack at them, they made for what we call the Fountain area, which is a Protestant working-class ghetto. As a group of Catholic workers, they instinctively made for a Protestant working class area once their emotions had been aroused, and they left no doubt in anyone's mind that when they got there they intended to beat the daylighters out of any Protestants they found. I believe that we have failed to get our position across in the last six months. It is perfectly obvious that people do still see themselves as Catholics and Protestants, and the cry 'get the Protestants' is still very much on the lips of the Catholic working class. Everyone applauds loudly when one says in a speech that we are not sectarian, we are fighting for the rights of all Irish workers, but really that's because they see this as the new way of getting at the Protestants.

Toman. That is only partly true. We have not as yet worked very hard at getting the support of the Protestant workers, but we have radicalized the Catholic working class and to a certain extent separated them from the Catholic middle class. In future we must use the enthusiasm of the Catholic workers to get across to the Protestant working class as well. For example in Armagh a member of the rd who is also a republican managed to get the local people to form a united tenants' action committee which does have some Protestant working-class support.

Farrell. Yes, I think that Eamonn's view is very much conditioned by Derry. It has certainly been my experience in other areas, particularly Bannside, where we fought the election and set up civil rights committees and in Mid-Ulster generally, that there is not this hostility towards Protestants. For example at an election meeting at Moneymore the other night we were stoned and beaten by extremist Protestants, but the people supporting us were not provoked and did not attempt to retaliate. I have repeatedly found—though this may be non-sectarianism in theory rather than practice—that if you urge Catholics to accept Protestants as their brothers, this is always welcomed with a cheer and a clap. They are very devoted to the idea of not being sectarian even when in practice they may not have much opportunity to do this.

Devlin. I found myself that I did get through to Protestants while fighting this election. I had letters of support from Protestants, who still had the mentality of apologising for the fact, starting off 'I am a Protestant but as a socialist I agree with everything you say.' Our real difficulty is the support we get from people who are opposed to the Unionist party, not because it is capitalist, but because they associate it with having oppressed them because they are Catholics. Despite the fact that we are socialist we still get a lot of support from Catholic

capitalists and bigots. I think that the Protestants may be the best of our supporters because they are the more radical people, and that their socialism is more radical as they have worked out their positions. The basis on which we can communicate with the Protestants is by being honestly socialist.

People outside Northern Ireland fail to appreciate the confusion that exists here; nobody knows what they want or how to achieve it, and the sectarian division prevents some people from even discussing these problems. There are those who say that you must not mention words like 'Republic', because it raises the fear of a united Ireland in the minds of the Protestant working class. Others say 'Go out and say you are a socialist.' Others say that everyone knows you are a socialist but that one must not say so because that will offend people who think that socialism is communism and is anti-christianity. Finally although I personally believe there is very little christianity in this country, there is a lot of religion, and the one way you would unite Protestants and Catholics is by trying to get rid of both churches at once.

You have referred to the original march through Burntollet, and yesterday's struggle started from a protest over the banning of a second march there. To what extent have you leafleted the Protestant areas you will be actually marching through, explaining to them that that the march is not meant as an aggression against them?

McCann. Absolutely none. Only occasional, half-hearted efforts have ever been made at doing this. We have never had a perspective here.

But you've been trying to march through these areas since January.

McCann. All we have done is issue little press statements and rant and raved at public meetings. There has been no concrete work done because there is no organization which has been able to sit down and say this is our perspective, this is our reason for being in the Civil Rights movement, and what we want out of the Civil Rights movement is A and B and C and here is how we go and get it. All our failures spring from the lack of anything even resembling a revolutionary party. You see, who would issue such a leaflet? Certainly not the Civil Rights movement who would never allow us to produce a leaflet explaining to the Protestant working class our reasons for marching through Burntollet. The CRA would split immediately because we have unbridgable differences with the so called moderates within the Civil Rights movement. There is nothing which exists that could issue such a leaflet.

Farrell. People's Democracy could issue such a leaflet.

McCann. It doesn't exist here.

Farrell. People's Democracy could do it in Belfast and it could do it in Derry too, because the People's Democracy *idea* exists in Derry and that would give it enough following to allow you to issue such a leaflet.

If you accept Eamonn's account of Derry, what is the situation in Belfast? Your position there seems very weak by comparison.

Baxter. The situation in Belfast has not been developed and there have been no big meetings or marches there, but I think that you would get massive support if you tried to hold them there.

Farrell. PD was initially an almost wholly student organization and was reluctant to go on marches in Belfast at times when ordinary workers could take part, largely because they were afraid that they would be sectarian. PD has now broken down that barrier and there is a projected march for Belfast in the near future. There is every reason to believe that we shall have a large turn-out, not because of the strength of the PD but because of the Republicans who do have a considerable following in Belfast behind their theoretically non-sectarian programme.

Is that the Republicans or the Republican Labour Party?

Toman. The Republican *movement*, not the Republican Labour Party, which has practically no membership and no following except for that of Gerry Fitt. Fitt is a popular Westminster MP because he does good social work on a non-sectarian basis, and gets houses for Protestants as well as Catholics, but he has no coherent political position.

This raises the question of your own organization. What is the state of it?

Devlin. We are totally unorganized and totally without any form of discipline within ourselves. I'd say that there are hardly two of us who really agree, and it will take a lot of discussion to get ourselves organized. The fact of the matter is that everybody knows where they don't want us to go, but nobody really knows what they do want and nobody is prepared to organize: we are all madly tearing off—nowhere.

Toman. A few people did come together before the Westminster election.

Devlin. Yes, about ten or fifteen in a population of more than a million.

Toman. Also, we did attempt to set up a group before the Stormont elections in January, but that too fell into abeyance. The Stormont Election completely dispersed us. Which may prove to have been beneficial, in that it forced us to break clear of our student base whilst at the same time we established ourselves as a national force. But it did mean that we lost the physical proximity necessary to strengthen ourselves politically and organizationally. Now in fact we face the problem of organizing PD from scratch.

McCann. As I've already said, the reason we have no organization is that we effectively dissolved ourselves politically into the Civil Rights movement: so effectively, in fact, that we have nothing to recruit people into once they have been radicalized by that movement. It has been a crucial error and a grievous one.

The local Civil Rights associations in the different towns seem to have been substitutes for your own organization. Have they merely compounded your problems?

Farrell. The Republicans have also been of very great organizational assistance, both to PD marches, such as the Long march in January, and to the Civil Rights and PD meetings in towns, where they have often provided the stewards and so on. As far as the local Civil Rights associations are concerned, they have brought us right up against the Catholic bourgeoisie. Initially, when the CR committees were formed they tended to be committees of the local bourgeoisie of each area, sometimes with a token gesture in the direction of workers. Only in Derry, where it sprang directly from the events of October 5th, was a Citizens' Action Committee elected by a public meeting. Other local committees were called for by the national CRA out of the context of a local struggle. All of them have emphasized the ending of the religious discrimination that has a painful effect on the prospects of the Catholic middle class, and an end to the Special Powers Act, which is aimed almost exclusively at Catholics. We have tried to swing the emphasis onto more general social and economic demands. For example, rather than demanding less discrimination in the allocation of housing we have demanded more houses, and we have had a certain amount of success. There has been a definite shift away from the green Tories and nationalists who originally dominated the committees.

McCann. There is a mis-statement of fact in what Mike says, which is important because of its reverberations. The Derry citizens' action committee was not elected by a mass meeting of any sort. It was elected by a meeting of about one hundred of the Catholic middle class of Derry on October 9th, specifically to steer the movement away from dangerous territory. There is a millionaire among its four leading members but not a single working man, and even though they have failed so far to channel the thing in a safe direction they will always try to stop short of a fundamental confrontation.

Toman. There is a new problem. So far we have spent much more of our time getting people to act and to react to situations, than we have in working out how in the long run action will really assist them. Coming together for this interview is probably the first time the people here have discussed problems in any depth for a couple of months. Now originally the difference between us and the bourgeois Civil Rights leaders was that we advocated action and they didn't, and our strength in the movement grew because of that. The Catholic middle class have now cottoned-on to this and have in many areas begun to advocate action themselves, usually action which is meaningless from anybody's point of view, which they can't control and whose consequences they do not perceive. Yesterday's proposed march through Burntollet is an example. It was called by the local Civil Rights association without any national consultation, either with the CR executive or with us. They were unable to react to the completely predictable threat that the Orangemen would oppose them with force, and when the march was banned all they could do was simply call everything off. Our danger is that the Catholic middle class will propose a whole series of mindlessly

militant actions across the province, and that instead of forming any socialist party will have to chase all over the place trying to scrape up some meaningful debris from these actions. Indeed this process seems to have already started.

The implication is that you are shoring up the Civil Rights movement, firstly by posing militant demands which mobilize the Catholic workers and small farmers, giving the movement its numbers, and secondly by keeping this militancy within the arc of the Civil Rights movement. At the same time, it appears that you have been unable to transform it. So although at first sight you give it direction and punch, it seems that you are in fact performing a servicing function for the CRM rather than vice versa?

Toman. Yes, this is broadly true. There have been some attempts to change it though. For example, in Armagh Civil Rights have called for a march some time in May and the PD group which has formed there even discussed not supporting such a march which, like the previous one in the town, is only likely to lead to a sectarian balls-up. But instead we decided to have a week of actions prior to the march, picketing, demonstrating over the housing problem there, occupying the labour exchange and issuing leaflets; in other words making our socialist position clear, and then participating in the Civil Rights march on those terms. Either they will have to reject us or we will transform the Civil Rights issue into one based on socialist demands.

In striking contrast to England there is a living revolutionary tradition in Ireland. What forms does it take and how does it assist you?

McCann. It's Republicanism, and the idea of the revolution is implanted in the minds of the Irish people surrounded by the glory of 1916 and its revolutionary martyrs. The idea of revolution is not at all alien to the Irish working class, as it is to the English, and when one calls for revolution, no matter what one actually demands there is always a link to Connolly and to 1916 and the armed uprising. What we have to do is to complete the national revolution by making the theoretical and practical link between what we are doing now, and what was fought for in 1916.

Ferrell. Bourgeois democracy and the national state are recent developments in Ireland and their traditions do not run deep, in contrast to the tradition of armed insurrection, of revolution as a means. Republicanism, which is a radical movement based mainly on small peasant farmers, is the culmination of a long popular tradition of agitation for some sort of co-operatively organized farming society. This is something which more orthodox forms of metropolitan socialism must come to terms with, in a rural society like Ireland, and what we are trying to do is to link this very powerful tradition to the concept of international proletarian revolution.

How do you see the present political situation developing?

Ferrell. My own views on this are rather tentative at the moment. In the past we tended to see O'Neill as representing modern liberalizing

capitalism, and in particular the interests of English, American and West German big capital as against the older native capitalism. O'Neill wanted to modernize things to bring them more or less into line with the rest of Western society. Further we thought that this sort of development was almost inevitable, with perhaps a Paisleyite backlash against it. Now it seems clear that although O'Neill represents these things, Northern Ireland cannot see the triumph of modernizing capitalism. The Paisleyite backlash of Protestant workers and farmers is so powerful it looks as though the reformers cannot win without destroying the Unionist Party, and if they destroy the Unionist Party they cannot win at all. Unless, perhaps, they could form a link with the bourgeois section of the Civil Rights movement, but it seems that the Civil Rights movement has gone too far for that now.

What are your strategic conceptions? How are you going to develop into a force for revolution?

Farrell. The question of a revolutionary programme is a very complex one here in Northern Ireland. We cannot call for all power to the Soviets because our present basis is not the working class as a whole, or the working class and small farmers as a whole, it is only one section of the working class. This leaves us with the question of whether we concentrate initially on putting forward the largely reformist demands which could unite Catholics and Protestant working class, or whether we concentrate on posing the question of dual power in areas where the Catholic population is concentrated and militant—by getting the local Catholic population to take over and run its own affairs, a sort of 'Catholic power'. This would be a very serious decision, but it is just possible that it might be necessary for us to establish such dual power: on the one hand Catholic-based power, of a socialist form, and on the other, Unionist state power. This would demand a socialist movement among the Catholics to create socialist councils such that Protestant workers can see that they fulfil class demands rather than creed demands, and want to create councils for themselves or merge with the Catholics in them.

Would this raise the question of secession?

Farrell. Well, there's no question whatsoever of that, because the areas where the Catholic section of the population is militant are not the two areas which are supposed to have Catholic majorities—Tyrone and Fermanagh. The most militant area is Derry, after that perhaps Newry which is in South Armagh, after that perhaps a part of county Tyrone. Anyway you couldn't take out whole areas like Fermanagh and Tyrone because they contain vast tracts of country which are inhabited by people of very extreme Protestant views. Secession is as out of the question as is assistance from the 26 counties, where the bourgeois government, far from assisting any working-class movement (as I'm afraid some people in the Bogside imagine) will immediately fall with the six-country bourgeois government. The problem as I see it is that if you went ahead and tried to establish dual power in Catholic sectors you would have to do this in a number of clearly delineated and separate areas—Derry, Newry, Cole Island and Dungannon, perhaps. The other

way of dealing with the sectarian divide is to shift the whole emphasis of the CR movement away from symbolic activities such as marches to smaller agitational groups working on housing, farming and employment, and try and involve Protestants in these.

McCann. There is a terrible confusion in what has just been said over the business of Catholic areas electing local committees. We must always remember that there are already Catholic areas with 'Catholic power'. Newry has an overwhelmingly Catholic majority, too great to be gerrymandered. It *has* Catholic power. Further, there is nothing more calculated to prove to the Protestant working class that the Civil Rights people all wear papal flags under their jerseys, than the establishment of unofficial pope-head councils in areas like Derry and Dungannon. It would remove the possibility of winning any Protestants over to our cause and therefore nothing could put the establishment of *socialist* power further into the distance.

Farrell. Eamonn is wrong about Newry. In Newry you have an urban council elected under a restricted ratepayer's franchise; a bourgeois electoral framework which in the past has enabled an alliance of the Unionist Party and Green Tories to control the council against a weak and watery Irish Labour Party. What I suggested as a possibility was something quite different, the election of *popular* councils based on universal franchise defying the bourgeois state and not recognizing Stormont, which of course Newry Urban council does. This would be something totally anti-bourgeois. I'm not saying that this is the answer, I'm saying that we have to think about this as a possible answer.

McCann. Let me explain. You cannot have a Catholic popular council elected and then reveal the socialist nature of it. If you want to elect a socialist council you must campaign on radical socialist issues. It is impossible, for example, to elect a 'Catholic power' body which can do anything about housing. One of the reasons *why* there are not enough houses in Northern Ireland is that the central house-building agency, the Northern Ireland Housing Trust, owes £73,000,000 to the Central Bank and paid £3,500,000 alone in interest last year. This sort of thing has to be brought into the open, by campaigning on demands for the nationalization of the housing societies and the cancellation of the housing trust debt. O'Neill represents an adaption to the changing needs of imperialism in Northern Ireland, an attempt to escape from the old sectarian slogans which have ceased to be an adequate political arsenal for the modern bourgeois leader. He is going to fail because the North is tied, just as the South is in different ways, to Britain, and therefore to the failure of the Wilson government to solve the crisis of capitalism in Britain. O'Neill knows, and the whole Unionist Party knows, that they cannot deliver any better economic deal for the people of Northern Ireland in the immediate future. Unless we understand this and start to link it up to the cuts in the social services, the laws against the Trade Unions and so on, we are never going to be able to build any organization capable of overthrowing Toryism in this country. If we talk about local issues like Catholic councils without campaigning on the broad issues, we will never get anywhere.

Farrell. This is a misinterpretation of what I am saying. I used the words 'Catholic power' humorously. What I in fact meant was that in areas of heightened struggle such as Derry, or areas of Derry, it would be possible to elect a popular council. Now a popular council would, in the nature of things in Northern Ireland, be a Catholic council in that it would be mainly elected by Catholic workers. But it would not be elected as a Catholic council, and the purpose of electing it would not be to remedy the lack of representation of Catholics. It would be elected as a people's council in an area where people are singularly militant. It would be elected to remedy popular demands and therefore it would come up against all the general issues, such as interest rates for loans on housing, and it would have to campaign against them.

McCann. Dual power in this situation can only be Catholic power versus what Mike calls Unionist state power, which would in effect be Protestant power. You would not carry the Catholic middle class with you on such a programme, so it would be Catholic workers more or less versus the rest. Given the consciousness of the people at the moment, to which we have contributed, it could not be done. What we have got to do now is to realize what a mess we have made of the whole thing over the past few months. To give you an example of how big a mess we have made of it, we have been chanting 'One man-One job' for months, especially in Derry where we have the most militant and largest Civil Rights movement in the country. A few months ago half the work force of a factory in Derry was laid off, Catholics and Protestants alike. No one thought about organizing a march, of making our demands specific and concrete. We didn't raise the demand of 'No redundancies, work sharing on full pay'. We were so busy shouting 'One man-One job' and in keeping our mass audience, that when a real concrete material issue came up on which it might have been possible to prove to Protestant workers that what we are demanding is in their material interests, we were running around the streets in the Civil Rights movement. We have failed to give a socialist perspective because we have failed to create any socialist organization. What we must do now, even in the volatile state of politics we are in tonight in Northern Ireland, is to set up with the greatest urgency a serious organization. Even if it is only something into which we can recruit people to form lines of communication. We cannot form a Bolshevik party overnight. Rather than set up councils, we must try to set up some sort of radical socialist front between republicans and ourselves.

Farrell. The two are not necessarily contradictory. When the Bolsheviks campaigned for all power to the Soviets, the Soviets and the Bolshevik Party were not the same thing. The Bolshevik party existed as a party making demands and making an analysis. The Soviets were radical assemblies of workers. It would be possible to have a revolutionary socialist party, as well as to establish people's councils and fight for a majority on those councils. I do not want to be represented as an advocate of 'Catholic Power', but I do insist that we have to explore the radical possibilities of the base that we do have, at this moment, among the working class, and that base is the Catholic section of the working class.

Whatever the differences between you on the immediate potential of the Catholic working class, you all seem to agree that the road to socialism in Ireland must pass via the Protestant working class. Is that so?

Toman. I would answer that by saying bluntly, yes. It may seem rather unfortunate if one puts it like that, but if we are going to have a socialist workers' republic then we have got to have Protestants in it. They are the section of the people who support us least, but they are a decisive part of the urban proletariat. Therefore everything depends on winning them over.

Baxter. It's not even a question of their being in the majority in Ulster. You can't have a revolution in Ulster alone, and our aim must be to create a socialist republic, something on the lines of Cuba, without waiting for a British workers' republic—or we might have to wait a very long time. But even in Ireland as a whole, let alone Ulster, you cannot move in a socialist direction unless you have the support of some sections of the Protestant working class. Otherwise they will start a sectarian struggle and all the forces of Catholic reaction will swamp us.

Farrell. Could I say something about the question of the border here? The border must go, but it must go in the direction of a socialist republic and not just into a republic which might at some future date become socialist. Firstly the border must go because it is a relic of imperialism, and in order to root out imperialism we have to root out the neo-imperialist set-up in the South and the neo-colonial one in the North. Secondly, Northern Ireland is completely unviable economically and only exists as a capitalist entity at the moment because of massive subventions from Britain. Similarly the South on its own is an area of small farms with very little industry. It too is completely unviable on its own and as a result is also dependent on Britain. The unification of Ireland into a socialist republic is not only necessary for the creation of a viable economy, it must also be an immediate demand, because only the concept of a socialist republic can ever reconcile Protestant workers, who rightly have a very deep-seated fear of a Roman Catholic republic, to the ending of the border.

Who are your allies south of the Border?

Farrell. Our allies in the South are socialists, trade unionists and radical Republicans. The problem that we have in the South and which we met on our Easter march from Belfast to Dublin, is that there is more sympathy with our approach among the older people, the radical section of Sinn Féin and Trade Union militants, than there is among students—which is paradoxical given the student composition of PD. Our differences with the Dublin students are partly caused by misinformation, partly to our inadequate analysis of the situation in the South and partly because in the North we have much more contact with the working class than student bodies in the South which are purely university based.

McCann. The real reason why we are having trouble with our comrades in the South, comes back once again to the fact that there is no one

single organization to which they and we belong. Our only means of contact with the South is telephone calls to people we happen to know personally, so of course there is confusion about what we and they are doing.

Toman. There is a very promising Civil Rights movement in the West of Ireland, in Galway, which is an acutely depressed area, as well as some action in the East—especially a militant housing action committee in Dublin. But I am inclined to think that Civil Rights is only a label in the East of the 26 counties, and that the traditional forms of agitation are the way to get things going there.

What was your calculation when you participated in the Stormont elections?

Farrell. The decision to participate in the Stormont elections was very simple, and didn't involve us in any great problems. The election represented a Gaullist-type strategy on the part of O'Neill. He staged a election to frighten the bourgeoisie and the farmers in an attempt to produce a consensus which would bring the Catholic and Protestant middle classes behind him in a policy of reforming capitalism—thus completely isolating the Catholic working class, who were just beginning to stir. We participated in the election to smash this consensus, and in order to destroy (particularly among the Catholics who were very vulnerable to this) the notion that O'Neill's reforms would meet our demands. Our participation in the election was very successful from that point of view.

We stood on a radical civil rights platform, which was a socialist platform, which included the demand for workers' control, and it involved us very little in the way of electoral compromise. Further we chose seats which we were most unlikely to win, as we had no desire or intention of winning any seats, and we would have been gravely embarrassed if we had won any.

Are you embarrassed by Bernadette's victory now?

Toman. It's difficult to answer that with Bernadette here.

Devlin. I think you should answer it.

Toman. We hoped Bernadette would win, we expected her to win and we encouraged her, very much against her own will, to stand. First because it is important to show people that they have, to use their own words, 'got up off their knees'. Secondly, because it is an excellent means of gaining publicity for the situation over here. Thirdly, because there was a terrible fear that if Bernadette didn't stand somebody much worse would (*laughter*). If I could explain that. Austin Currey, who is at present a Nationalist MP at Stormont was a strong runner for the seat and would not have campaigned on an anti-sectarian platform. Fourthly, Bernadette brought to a lot of people for the first time the idea of a socialist republic.

Unfortunately part of the strategy may not have worked as Austin

Currey may be the new MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

Devlin. That is not true, people were making it clear that they didn't want Austin Currey for Fermanagh and South Tyrone. They were aware of the fact that one of the reasons why he was willing to give up Mid-Ulster was that it might strengthen his chances there. The peasants of Mid-Ulster may not be particularly bright in the eyes of the *New Left Review*, but they know a political opportunist when they see one, and Austin Currey has a big X after his name.

Farrell. I am worried about two aspects of the electoral campaign in Mid-Ulster. The first is that Nationalist MPs did speak on Bernadette's election platform, which clearly was a grave embarrassment. These people are Green Tories, they are Capitalists and they are Catholic Sectarians and even their so-called left wingers are as much our enemy as the Unionist Party. It was very dangerous to allow them to speak, it could have totally distorted the candidature in the minds of the Protestants as one which represented Catholics alone—an attempt, in other words, to bring Catholics to power over the heads of Protestants. These people participated more or less on Bernadette's terms, which improves things slightly, but it would have been much better if they had not been there at all.

Secondly, the platform should have been a clearly socialist one and not one which emphasized *unity* in terms which could only mean unity of all classes within one creed rather than the unity of one class regardless of creed.

Devlin. It did not work out that way in the end. Brookeborough, the grand old Protestant himself, said that we had gained quite a lot, in his opinion far too many, Protestant votes. I was not worried about the recognizable Nationalists; by having them on the platform we effectively destroyed both Tommy Gormley and Buddy O'Connor, the Nationalist MPs for Mid and West Tyrone. Currey, it is true, was more difficult to deal with. Further the Protestants who voted for me could only have done so on a socialist basis; the platform was therefore socialist.

The reasons that Catholics who are not Socialists voted for me is that they did not want the Unionists to win. I agree that this is unfortunate, but I have no doubt that within a year these people will do their best to destroy me, and possibly may succeed. Within a year we will have sorted out the Catholics who voted for us on a purely Catholic basis and we will still have the support of the Protestants who supported us on a socialist basis, therefore we will have established the normal situation of the socialists supporting us and the non-socialists pulling out. As they are already.

Farrell. I'm worried about two points. During the election Currey's speeches emphasized sectarian rather than class issues, and since the election he has been emphasizing the unity of all anti-Unionist parties, which in practice means unity of all Catholics against Protestants. So this election may have aided the idea of Pan-Catholic unity, which is a

concept we must destroy. Secondly, by putting up and supporting Bernadette we may have given credence to bourgeois parliamentary politics and given people false hopes, while at the same time Bernadette is swallowed up in Parliamentary procedures, which would demoralize and reduce support for the non-sectarian part of the platform which was put forward.

Devlin. This is quite unfair to my victory rally speech. Despite the fact that all of you supported me in getting into the bourgeois Parliament, very few of you remained for the final scene of my crucifixion. When all the Pan-Catholics turned up to celebrate, it was really too much for the good socialists. In my speech after I was elected, I made it quite clear that if people thought that by sending me to Westminster, I or anyone else was capable of doing anything for them there they were quite mistaken. I said that all I could do was prove, by trying, that nothing could be done in such a parliament and that in a very short space of time I would be back to call them out of the factories, and if they were not at that stage prepared to come then they should leave my victory rally and trot off to join all the people who thought they could do something by parliamentary methods. But most of them were so glad they just swallowed it all anyway.

Farrell. The points that I am trying to make cannot be covered by a speech. The danger of being swallowed by parliamentarism requires constant vigilance and a clearly worked out socialist strategy towards a bourgeois parliament, using parliament as a sounding box and as only one section of an activity which is mainly extra-parliamentary. This is a matter which must be decided on as a matter of great priority.

Do you have any initial plans as to how you are going to use Parliament as a sounding-box?

Devlin. I have less faith in the whole thing than anybody who put me into the job in the first place. I will undoubtedly be treated with courtesy, I will be allowed, as a good little baby of Parliament, to make my maiden speech undisturbed, and then I will be told to behave like a good child and say nothing more. I won't accept this and I will probably spend most of my time working among the people of Mid-Ulster and working in the streets of London where I feel much more at home.

Farrell. The question of how one treats Westminster raises the much more serious theoretical issue of what demands we make of Westminster and of Britain as Irish Socialists working for a Socialist Republic.

McCann. By the way are we all aware that British troops were called in about an hour ago to guard key installations here?

Farrell. Well, that merely underscores the imperialist situation of Northern Ireland. The point I was making was that we must reject the idea of Westminster intervening to secure reform in Northern Ireland. We do not want reform of Northern Ireland, we want a revolution in Ireland and we will not get that by any Westminster intervention. The

role of an MP at Westminster should be to mobilize Irish immigrants in England, and to campaign against both Irish bourgeois States, exposing emigration from Ireland as one of their most serious contradictions and emphasizing the right of the Irish to have a job and a home in Ireland itself.

Devlin. That is what I have been advocating. Much to the horror of everybody on the press, I made a simple statement that when the Westminster Parliament refuses to listen and act, I will go to the people who have been forced out of Ireland and work among them.

McCann. Obviously, no one here imagines that our problems could be solved by intervention from Westminster. But an awful lot of our supporters do see such intervention as a means of solving the problem over which we have been agitating. It is necessary to go to Westminster to demand the solution to these problems to show that Westminster is a farce, and that we will have to do it ourselves.

Farrell. There is one positive aspect to the chaotic nature of the whole scene here, that it has brought a lot of people into action who would not have been won to socialism by any programme. This very discussion has illustrated the need too for a radical socialist Party, but equally it has shown that we cannot form any high level organization, as we do not yet have the theoretical basis for any clearly determined policies, in fact we have not even discussed some elementary problems. What we need to form at the moment is some sort of alliance to develop a theoretical analysis of our struggle in the North, as well as to carry out systematic agitational work.

What sort of international solidarity action is of greatest assistance to you, in particular from comrades in England, Scotland and Wales?

Devlin. At the risk of offending our comrades in the rest of the United Kingdom I think that there is very little that they can do at this stage because they simply do not understand the mentality or the basic personality of the Irish people. In particular, the small farmers have a radical tradition, as Mike was just saying, but they do not like you using doctrinaire terms, and the workers will spell out workers' control for you, but they don't like you trying to do it for them.

Toman. Break up Ulster weeks, launch an attack on O'Neill and 'liberal Unionism', help organize the Paddies, the Irish immigrants, and raise money for PD.

Baxter. There was only one time historically that English workers could really have helped and that was the general strike of 1913. Then they failed to show solidarity in blacking cargoes from Ireland. If there were any comparable industrial action today, we would need help from across the water.

What is your attitude to the demands that some English comrades have put forward for an end to British Aid to Ulster?

McCann. They are very bad. They imply that the Protestants are white sahibs and that this is a colonial state. Ulster is *not* just a colonial state; it is in many respects, though not in all respects, an ordinary bourgeois state. The subsidies do not support a privileged layer of the population. The Catholic working class have a lot of children and receive a lot of state benefits. These sorts of demands may appear to be formally justified. But at ground level they are not effective. You can't demand them in Britain and not demand them here, and if you go to the most militant section of the working class and demand that family allowances be stopped you are not going to get very far. The whole national question comes in here but the simple fact of it is that you can't go down to Bogside and advocate that British subsidies are withdrawn.

Farrell. The Irish Socialist Republic cannot be built in isolation. The old rule is true; the best way English comrades can help the Irish revolution is by making the English revolution. And the second best way they can do this is by not misunderstanding the Irish revolution as a simple national struggle against colonialism or a simple struggle of the Catholic peasants against the Protestant landlords. Because it is much more complex than that, and they should get the complexity of the situation here into their heads.

Interviewer A.B.—April 20 1969.

Herbert Marcuse

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The Dialectic of Religion and Class in Ulster

The six most north-easterly counties of the Irish mainland form a colony 16 mile from the coast of the Mother Country. A third of its population owe it neither historical, nor religious, nor political allegiance. The industry of these six counties has been in decline for over a decade. Its political universe has been subject to an ideological retardation dating back centuries. 'The truth about the Unionist state is that it is founded upon negations.'¹

The recent General Election was called in a vain attempt to solve at the polls a series of problems which were in fact intractable within the existing constitutional framework. The results at the parliamentary level was predictably inconclusive; outside parliament it demonstrated the growing support on the one hand for extreme right-wing Protestantism, and on the other for the radical socialist wing of the Civil Rights movement.

Antecedents

In the 16th century, communal land made up the greater proportion of the land in Ireland. For the next 100 years, Ireland suffered a continual pillage at the hands of the overlord power of England. Where resistance to colonial terrorism was

strongest, in the north-east, James I—in despair at the failure of the Irish Reformation—offered the province of Ulster to the English mercantile class on the condition that they established there a non-Catholic ‘plantation’ of yeoman farmers, townsmen, artisans and traders. The material they used was Scottish and Presbyterian.

The Southern provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht meanwhile remained ruthlessly exploited occupied territories. The stages of exploitation are numerous. The first wave of expropriations dates from Cromwell’s time; the second from the reign of William of Orange, when he defeated James II at the Battle of the Boyne; in gratitude William allocated vast estates to adventurers in his following, while safeguarding the Protestant landowning ascendancy in Ulster.

The Battle of the Boyne inflicted on the South a land system which prevented agricultural competition with both England and the North. Capital could be neither accumulated nor invested. No internal market was possible, and thus no middle class appeared. In Ulster it had been present since the plantations. Like its counterpart in England it was interested in a removal of economic restrictions and in gaining for its native industries a measure of protection. Throughout the remainder of Ireland power rested in the hands of a miniscule group of landowners, performing no economic functions and with no claim to the allegiance of the peasantry. It had to rely for its dominance on the support of an English army maintained through Dublin by a huge and corrupt bureaucracy. Even so, Irish agriculture potentially threatened England’s confinement of Ireland to a debtor role, with a heavy annual tax burden. The absurdity of this situation led the Ulster middle class to seek an alliance with the more progressive Anglo-Irish landlords; this produced the Irish Volunteers, who gained from England the concession of partial legislative autonomy in ‘Grattan’s Parliament’ of 1782. As leader of this parliament, Grattan claimed freedom for property-owners of all religions—‘The Irish protestant could never be free until the Irish catholic ceased to be a slave’—while simultaneously seeing that if this freedom was achieved the armed support needed to maintain the land system would disappear. The introduction of English industrial technology managed to obscure this contradiction for some 10 years. Eventually, however, it became increasingly obvious to the more radical members of the Ulster middle class that Grattan’s provisions were utterly inadequate.

The increasing parliamentary impotence of the professional strata of the middle class led to their recruitment, under Wolfe Tone, into a revolutionary secret society, the *United Irishmen*, probably the most progressive bourgeois force ever to exist on these islands. Tone conceived of himself and his movement as in essentially the same situation as the French revolutionaries of 1789.

Tone managed to achieve the support of elements of the Catholic peasant masses, especially in the North. In areas where sectarian conflict existed least he gained some success amongst the propertyless Pro-

¹ *Ireland in the Age of Reform and Revolution*, Nicholas Mansergh, Allen and Unwin, 1940.

testants. But by 1798, as the movement got off the ground in the countryside, its leadership had already been decimated by internal betrayal and a loss of nerve. General Lake's reign of terror, in which the Orange Order was used directly by the State for the first time, eliminated it altogether. The movement's potentiality provided the political excuse for the Act of Union in 1801; in fact it was the landowners' refusal in the Irish puppet parliament to surrender every vestige of autonomy to England that precipitated this coup. Irish industry's inability to keep up with the more advanced innovations of the industrial revolution, which demanded abundant supplies of coal, had in any event weakened its capacity to resist English pressure. Only linen production in the north was no threat to England and survived, later providing a financial basis for industrial development in Belfast. The 19th century saw the South relegated to the status of a supply-area: cheap food and labour for Britain. Both Anglo-Irish landowners and the nascent urban middle class had been economically defeated.

After a temporary revival during the Napoleonic Wars, Southern Ireland underwent rapid social disintegration: the constant threat of peasant revolution was averted only by skilful manoeuvring of the weak, Catholic, rural middle class. Where did this class come from? As the largest landowners increasingly became absenteees, intensifying rack-rents, they created a class of Catholic middle-men and money lenders (gombeens) who slowly accumulated enough wealth to become small landowners themselves. It was this group who under O'Connell sought integration with the Anglo-Irish colonial landowning class through religious emancipation. In the movement they created to this end they managed to harness the desperate Catholic peasantry, large through the agency of the Church, promising them to ameliorate the land situation. However, 'amelioration' possessed two quite distinct meanings for the classes involved. For the middle class it meant *rationalization* of the existing direction of events: an acceleration of the trend toward cattle-farming on exhausted land. For the peasants it meant a revolutionary redistribution of land as the only form of wealth. Even given the divergent directions of the movement, the acceptance by the middle class of the abandonment of tillage was a confession of weakness. Its most energetic members—professionals, merchants, and shopkeepers—disappeared with many of their clients, during and after the Famine. Henceforth most of the Catholic bourgeoisie gravitated—still unheard—to the Nationalist Party, while the peasantry provided the motor for the sporadic quasi-insurrectionary movements of Emmet, the Young Irelanders, the Fenians, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and eventually the IRA.

Ulster and the Emergence of Home Rule

Ulster was the only part of Ireland where an urban middle class experienced a 'natural' historical growth. It was allowed to industrialize unimpeded. Its ascendancy was based on the Penal Laws, which forbade Catholics to rival it economically. Thus, as Connolly pointed out 'Already by the outbreak of the Williamite war in the generation succeeding Cromwell, the industries of the North of Ireland had so far developed that the "Prentice Boys" of Derry were the dominant

factor in determining the attitude of that city toward the contending English kings.²

Not all Ulster Protestants, of course, were bourgeois, or employed in industry. After the colony had been established, many impoverished Scottish crofters set out across the water in search of a better living. Amongst them there existed a traditionally strong piety—that of Knox, Calvin and Wesley. In the country areas they settled side by side with Catholics; they had been promised improved conditions and expected them yet they found the Catholic peasantry always willing to pay higher rents than them. For the Catholics, long conditioned by the land system, realized more readily that to possess land was the only way to survive. Protestant landlords often confirmed this by turning tenants of their own religion off land for which Catholics would pay more. The Scottish Ulsterman's reaction to this threat was what Strauss discreetly calls 'resolute intimidation'. Where Catholics attempted to establish cottage industries—after Grattan's parliament—they presented a double threat to the traditional basis of Protestant livelihood. The Protestants responded by creating secret societies, notably the Orange Order, whose first victims were the Armagh weavers—the Protestants' greatest competitors in the most competitive region in Ireland. The symbols the Order adopted—sashes, drums, pipes and King Billy banners—reflected their parochialism and sectarianism. When Dublin castle was unable to suppress Tone's project of giving the peasantry a radical political consciousness, the Orange Order was the only force able to keep the peasants divided. The great Northern landowners thus seized upon it as a providential gift, and the Ulster middle class followed its sectarian direction, turning from Tone's national ideal.

By 1829 and the crisis of Catholic Emancipation, Ulster linen was the only remaining protected industry in Ireland. The economic reason for this exemption was that it did not compete with any English trade. The political reason was that Ulster's superior status was thereby confirmed, and its bourgeoisie further divided from its peasantry by the enrichment of the former. Sufficient capital was accumulated for the development of new local industry—ship-building in Belfast and shirt manufacture in Derry. Ulster was thus able to avoid the swamping which hit the Irish Market. Customs barriers—a necessity for the survival of the South—had by the mid-19th century already become unacceptable to the Ulster bourgeoisie. Again, some years later, only Ulster was able to resist the introduction of wholesale ranching: for in this province grain, oats and flax could still be grown as cash crops. Ulster was thus the only province of Ireland able to resist the Famine, for in Ulster the land was not devoted to the potato. By the time of the great depression of the 1870's, Ulster's smallholders had become a buttress of secure conservatism. The Land Act of 1881, which barely affected conditions in the South, won them a reduction of rents which separated them com-

² *Labour in Irish History*, 1967 edition, p. 51. The Derry apprentices closed the gates of the city when they heard its mayor had surrendered the town to James II. Thus 'Derry's Walls' have acquired a religious significance for Ulster Protestants. Hence the depth of sectarian passions aroused by attempts of the Civil Rights Movement to hold meetings within them, and the opportunity for extreme Protestants to identify the less frantic Catholic-baiters in the Ulster ruling class with Mayor Lundy, the proto-typical traitor of 1690.

pletely from the insurrectionary Land League which was expanding at the time.

For the peasantry of Leinster, Munster and Connacht, the years 1875-1888 saw a final pauperization following in the wake of starvation disease, depopulation and a routing from the land in the fashion of the North American Indians. The average age of the Southern population was now 55, and its chief source of income was remittances from overseas relatives; even its role as English ranch-hands had been undermined. The Catholic bourgeoisie was no longer in a position where the Union yielded even the smallest rewards for it. Throughout the 19th century its appeals to Westminster had fallen on deaf ears. Home Rule was now the most moderate demand the Southern bourgeoisie could make which would prevent the peasants from turning on it: Michael Davitt was threatening to mobilize the peasantry in support of nationalization of the land under a Republican government. Its own objective in demanding Home Rule was distinct: it was an attempt to re-establish industrial protection in the South. It was precisely such protection that capitalists in England—alarmed by the decline in their share of the world market, after French, German and American tariffs—were determined to refuse. Strauss comments accurately: "The determined opposition of the landowning aristocracy to Home Rule could be taken for granted, but the violent and even hysterical hostility of the British business class would be incomprehensible but for this idea".³ Parnell hoped to create a buffer Catholic urban middle class (through industrialization) which would block any drift towards social revolution in Ireland.

While the Protestant capitalists in the North might in theory have regarded this project with political sympathy, in practice they saw it as a calamitous economic threat to them. For first Parnell, and later Sir John Esmonde—who were to be the voice of precisely the emergent class which Parnell anticipated⁴—regarded industrial Ulster as the corner-stone of their dream of a Gaelic Manchester. Belfast and Derry had no internal Irish competition. They enjoyed an integral link with British industry and commerce. Their working class was in some respects closer to that of Clydeside than of Dublin. It formed part of the great industrial triangle of the valleys of the Mersey, the Clyde and the Lagan. Under Home Rule it would simply subsidize the South and act as a catchment area for its taxation. *Thus Ulster became opposed to any form of Home Rule including partition—which would inevitably reduce its hinterland.*⁵

For most of the time the Belfast industrialists left the political leadership of the anti-Home Rule campaign in the hands of the Northern landowners and the British Conservative Party. It was these groups who

³ *Irish Nationalism and British Democracy*, Methuen, 1951.

⁴ The gradual relaxation of Britain's ties with the South was concomitant with minimal economic growth in certain service industries whose centres were displaced to the cities of Dublin and Cork. This allowed the growth of the class which was to become the new backbone of republicanism (and which also colluded in the defeat of the southern unskilled workers immediately prior to the First World War).

⁵ This is the meaning of MacGibbon's quotation at the beginning of this article. The fact is that *nobody* in Ireland before or during the Home Rule crisis wanted partition. When it was eventually suggested as a compromise it was regarded as implausible.

used Unionism as a stick with which to beat the British Liberals, whom they effectively fought to a halt before the First World War.

In 1918, Sinn Féin won an overwhelming electoral victory, and by 1920 a guerrilla war was in progress in the South. A settlement was now clearly imperative. A truce was arranged, and at the end of 1921 a treaty signed with provision for the establishment of an Irish Free State—to exclude most of Ulster. A commission was to determine just how much of Ulster could be retained without endangering Protestant hegemony within it. Attempts by sections of the national liberation movement to reject such a settlement were defeated by the big bourgeoisie of the south in the Civil War of 1922. By 1923 the Southern government was forced to sign an agreement which acknowledged the exclusion of the present six counties from the Irish Free State. For forty years, little changed in the Northern six counties 'loyal' to England: the pattern of class power survived wind and tide.

The Unionist Bloc

In Ulster today, the Unionist and Nationalist Parties form two political blocs, cemented by religion, which collude with and complement each other, under Unionist dominance. The unity of each bloc is dependent on the existence of the other. An understanding of the internal structure of each is a precondition of any correct analysis of the present crisis in Ulster. For it will be seen that the natural lines of class struggle have been nearly erased by the traditional party system of the North, which represents a monstrous distortion of the true social structure to the benefit of the Orange ruling class.

The Unionist Party, which has controlled the Ulster state for 50 years, is a bloc which welds together sections of at least five distinct social classes: 1. the landowners; 2. the industrial bourgeoisie; 3. the urban petit-bourgeoisie; 4. the working class; 5. the peasantry. This bloc has historically been led by the landowning class. It has been united by the ideology of Protestantism. It has been integrated by the institutions of the Orange Order. An analysis of Unionism must consider each of these aspects of its structure.

The landowning clique, symbolized by successive Premiers at Stormont—Craigavon, Brookeborough, O'Neill—is a branch of the traditional English ruling class. Within the British Empire, it traditionally provided a high proportion of army officers and to this day remains heavily Sandhurst-trained. It is distinguishable by source of income, style of life, education, world-view and accent: the rulers of Ulster speak to their people with a perfect Oxbridge inflection. This group has powerful ramifications into industrial capital, but is not exclusively identified with it. Local business men—the Orange bourgeoisie proper—have

even by the Unionists, who knew that Ulster (the eight-county province) would never return a majority of Unionists to a provincial parliament. Hence it was reduced to six counties—a totally artificial and arbitrary decision informed only by the desire to create permanent one-party rule.

historically played a subordinate part within the political elite of Unionism—although, it goes without saying, their economic interests have usually been rigorously safeguarded.⁶ The professional and middle segments of this bourgeoisie have historically been marginal to Ulster politics, if not excluded altogether. They have had little contact with the oligarchy above and have tended to regard the Lodges below as primitive and backward. Ulster, it should be remembered, has never truly experienced a successful bourgeois revolution. The struggle against Home Rule, the only major political issue to have appeared between 1789 and 1968, was led by the landowners in alliance with the English Conservative Party. The hallmark of bourgeois ascendancy in the nation state, is defined by its absence.

The integration of the Protestant working class into this ultra-reactionary bloc is the specific miracle of Unionism. It has been achieved by means of a unique set of institutions, the Orange Lodges, whose role can only be explained by reference to the other two groups cemented into the Unionist bloc: the peasantry and the petit-bourgeoisie. It has been seen how the Orange Lodges arose in the countryside, as Protestant peasant organizations aimed against fellow Catholic peasants and agricultural workers. After the famine, the depopulation of the countryside in the South took the form of emigration abroad. The concomitant but far less marked drift from the land in the North was largely absorbed by the expansion of Belfast. In that city a working class emerged possessing much the same characteristics as those of Clydeside and Merseyside—apart from the intensity of its piety. For traditional values and identifications were imported into the towns through the establishment there of Orange Lodges. Whereas these had originally been geographically-based peasant organizations, they now became congregationally-based urban centres of political and cultural life. In England the proclivity of the 'aristocracy of labour' and the petit-bourgeoisie for Working Mens Clubs and Friendly Societies reflected the relatively secondary penetration of religious differentiation within popular culture. In Ulster, the role that these institutions played was filled by Orange Lodges, unifying the leisure, political and religious activities of their members, in keeping with the precepts of the Presbyterian Calvinist or Wesleyan faiths.

The structure of these institutions enabled them to be flagrantly manipulated. Because of their partly masonic character (a product of their originally defensive mode of organization) and their ideological fusion with church and chapel structure, their politics and values were in no sense open to democratic contestation. In the local Lodges, the petit-bourgeoisie (through acknowledged possession of superior social attributes and proficiencies) usually became dominant. It could do this

⁶ Sir Horace Plunkett, leading Unionist politician and publicist at the start of the century, lamented this fact at length in 1905: 'For the lack of wise guidance which our captains of industry should have provided, Irish Unionism has, by too close adherence to the traditions of the landlord section, been the creed of a social cast rather than a policy in Ireland. . . . There must be a combination of the best thought of the country aristocracy and that of the captains of industry. Then, and not till then, shall we Unionists as a party exercise a healthful and stimulating influence on the thought and action of the people'. *Ireland in the New Century*, pp. 67–68.

in mixed congregations by using status and prestige, or in purely working class congregations by its supply of ministers. This is not to say that globally it controlled the Orange Order. Because much Orange fervour was still firmly located amongst the Church of Ireland poor, the prominent and wealthy members of this relatively High Church managed to attain the same hegemony in the cities as they had traditionally possessed in the countryside. Lodges based on the Presbyterian Church (the church of the middle and upper working class) were usually controlled by the petit-bourgeoisie, while those of the Church of Ireland remained under the direct control of the Northern oligarchy.

The capture by the landed and business elite of two senior Orange institutions, the Apprentice Boys of Derry and the Royal Black Preceptory, and their conversion into high-powered political machines clinched and solidified this mis-shapen class bloc. Both eventually played much the same role in Ulster as the Broederbond in South Africa. For the local Lodges had previously maintained a cultural continuity for the Protestant urban poor without providing them with a direct political expression or link with the ruling groups. Through the intervention of the officers of the Apprentice boys and the Preceptory, Protestants could now find access to housing, employment and social promotion, and the historical separation of differentiated education and residence was confirmed. In return, all that was demanded of the poor was their political allegiance.

For the working class a further institution was created to this end—the Unionist Labour Association. These were precipitated by the rise of the new Trade Unionism. Industrial combination appeared the one front where ruling-class hegemony might be seriously challenged. The events of 1907–13 are crucial to an understanding of how the expression of the objective interests of the Protestant workers never rose above the level of economism, and how the Unionist bloc survived intact.

At the beginning of the century, Protestants' and Catholics' work was already differentiated by skill, pay and security. The Protestant workers, often engaged in craft industries, were largely affiliated to the amalgamated English unions. The unskilled Catholics were either completely unorganized, or members of the new mass unions whose organization, ideology and practice threatened the respectable strivings of craftsmen. Until 1913, these new unions, under Larkin and Connolly, attained a special efficacy, and even managed to begin to draw substantial sections of the lower-paid Protestant workers under their wing. One of the major weapons of their armoury was the sympathy strike, whose successful co-ordination demanded a powerful and autonomous *Irish* ruc. Such a development was opposed by the British unions, who were able to combat this encroachment upon their interests by cutting off financial support for independent Irish action. This traitorous policy meant the destruction of the possibility of a united labour movement—a threat which Unionist bosses, however, took seriously enough to create local branches of the Association of 'loyal' Protestant workers. Connolly's later change of position on the national question and his move toward Republicanism meant that the imperialist fomentation of religious divisions amongst the workers could no longer be effect-

ively opposed. The blame for this historical disaster must be laid the door of British trade unionism.

Today, the labour movement in the Six Counties has been further weakened by a series of structural hurdles and judicial penalties. Whatever managerial policy happens to be, where Catholics and Protestants are employed together they are divided vertically or horizontally. Catholics are hampered by educational disadvantages and almost invariably take the lowest-paid jobs. In many areas they do not work at all; instead their wives are employed as cheap labour and the men stay at home with the children. Although in Derry women have displayed a high level of political militancy, great difficulties remain in their economic organization. Foreign firms, who establish plants with government aid and then pull out when they have maximized profit for one or two years, create a sector of permanent semi-casual labour. Meanwhile, the high degree of unemployment in both North and South has facilitated the blacklisting of union militants, often forcing activists to leave Ireland altogether.

Needless to say, the Unionist state has always rejected the legalization of minimum trade union rights. For as on most issues the Unionist Party in this connection is well to the right of the British Conservative Party. Trade unions are regarded as essentially anti-Unionist for the simple reason that they contain Unionists, Nationalists, Republicans, Socialists and Communists. This means that they do not fit into the vertical divisions of Ulster life, and hence renders them dangerous. The result of all these multiple blockages of an economic, political and religious character has been the prevention hitherto of the emergence of a powerful labour movement in Ulster.

To sum up: Protestantism as such has always been the articulation of Unionism, whose grass roots strength has been the Orange Lodge presided over by the Royal Black Preceptory and the Apprentice, Boy of Derry, organizations which contain every leading Unionist politician and most of Ulster's capitalists. The Protestant working class is provided with its major cultural and political institutions by the Lodge; and through them is linked directly with the ruling complex. Through this network Unionism has maintained blanket hegemony, demonstrated by the fact that at no election since the war have any more than 12 per cent of all Protestants ever voted Labour. (The diagrams on the following pages illustrate the complex interplay of religion and class in the politics of the Six Counties).

The Nationalist Bloc and the Catholic Opposition

The miserable Catholic obverse of the Unionist Party—miniature and mirror of it—has been the Nationalist Party, which represents substantially the same Home Rule policy as did its predecessor 80 years before. Its politics are clerical conservatism, its social base the Catholic landowners, tenant farmers and sections of the agricultural proletariat.

Whereas Unionism has succeeded in maintaining the solidity of the Orange bloc from the period of Home Rule down to the last few

The dialectic of Religion and class: the social basis of the present struggle.

Diagram 1 Religion and voting behaviour 1965

Religion

| CATHOLICS | PROTESTANTS |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| | Presbyterian 45% |
| | Church of Ireland 37% |
| | Methodist 8% |
| | Others 10% |

Politics

| CATHOLICS | PROTESTANTS |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Nationalist 58% | Unionist 86% |
| Northern Ireland Labour Party & Republican Labour Party 31% | Northern Ireland Labour Party 12% |
| Unionist 6% | Others 2% |
| Others 5% | |

NB The number admitting no religious affiliation is almost negligible

Diagram 2 Religion and geography

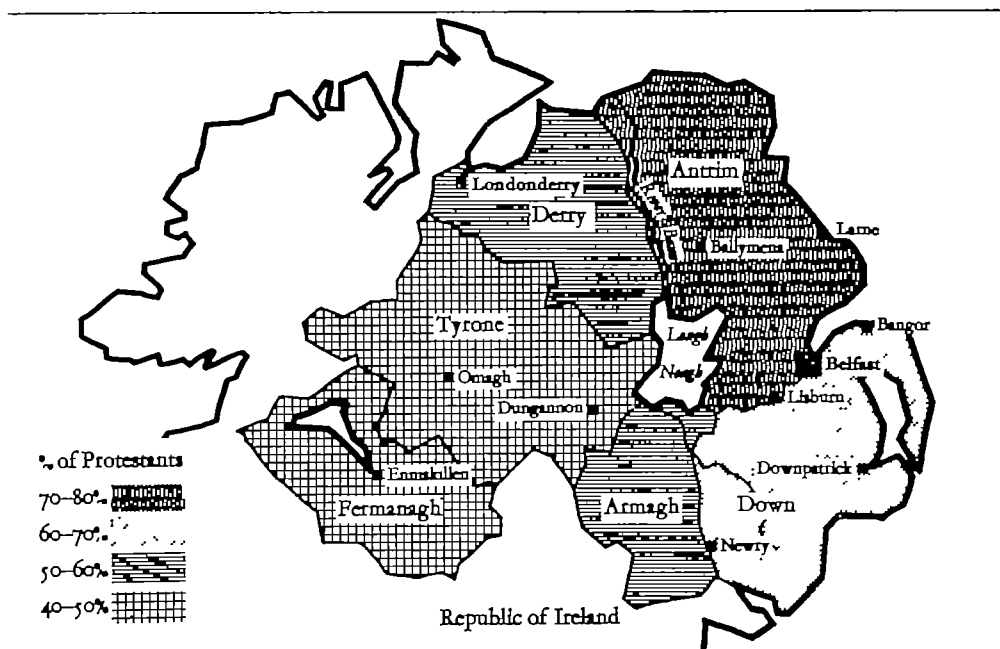
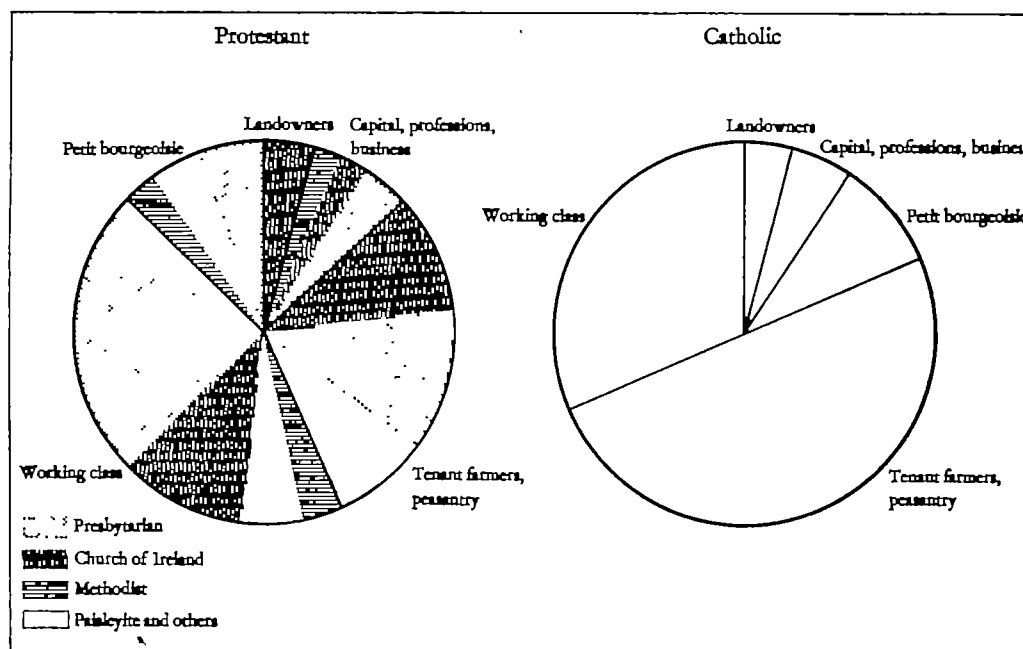


Diagram 3 Geography, population, industry, income and employment

| COUNTY | ACREAGE (EXCLUDING LAKES ETC) | POPULATION | NO. OF EMPLOYED PERSONS (EXCLUDING SELF-EMPLOYED) PER LEADING INDUSTRIES | AVERAGE INCOME PER PERSON (TAXABLE) P.A. |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|---|--|
| Antrim (inc. Belfast) | 718,881 | 689,761 | Shipbuilding 18,580 Agriculture 13,332 | £632 |
| Armagh | 312,727 | 117,594 | Agriculture 8,723 Weaving 2,491 | £524 |
| Down | 609,030 | 266,939 | Agriculture 14,122 Medical Services 3,892 | £557 |
| Fermanagh | 418,411 | 51,531 | Agriculture 7,519 | £512 |
| Derry | 514,713 | 165,298 | Agriculture 10,007 Men's Clothes 6,409 | £539 |
| Tyrone | 779,552 | 133,919 | Agriculture 13,075 Weaving 1,576 | £525 |

Diagram 4 Religion and class



months, the Nationalist Party has not had a comparable success in building a durable Green bloc. Before the independence struggle of 1916-21 had even taken place, it had lost the leadership of the national liberation struggle to bourgeois republicanism. It disappeared altogether in the South after the establishment of the Free State. Yet in the North, despite the inroads of Sinn Féin and the Labour movement, this anachronism retained its dominance. This paradox, of course, is a direct reflection of the ideological retardation of its Northern supporters. Indeed it is only through an understanding of the position of the Catholics in the North that we can see how an archaic relic like Irish Nationalism has survived at all. In their position as an oppressed group in Ulster, the Catholic peasantry were constantly driven to rely on the Church to express their demands, for the Church in Ulster came to play the role for them of the absent middle class. Contrary to popular Protestant opinion, the Catholic Church in Ireland has always played a very defensive and reactionary role in relation to mass movements, braking and limiting them wherever possible. Above all, it has tried to ensure that such movements never go beyond its control—that is, never become either interdenominational or revolutionary. In the South it was frequently forced to make concessions to mass movements because of the elemental energies that they released amongst the peasantry. In the North it faced no such problem. Just as the Protestants constructed an ideology of *embattlement* within Irish national territory, so the Catholics within Ulster territory precisely reproduced this outlook: a siege within a siege. Thus the traditional defensiveness of the Church was here *doubled* by the local defensiveness of its flock. The result was that the Catholic Church in the North could get away with building a political machine available only for specifically *Catholic* agitation. In the Home Rule period, the Northern Catholics had organized their own sectarian society—the Ancient Order of Hibernians—because of the attacks on them by the corresponding Orange groups. The Catholic Church thereafter manipulated the AOH to keep the less moderate and defensive elements of the Nationalist Party under close check. The decline of the Nationalist Party in Ireland as a whole was in fact partly due to the conservative influence exerted upon it by its sections in the North. It is not surprising, therefore, that it should have survived in Ulster alone, where its traditional rural constituency have, like their Protestant counterparts, thoroughly internalized their embattlement. It is in this context that we can understand the reciprocity of Unionism and Nationalism in Ulster, *both* the product of minority groups, and through this reciprocity their ultimate identity. Given the hopeless deadlock of the nexus they form together, the total absence of political debate in the six counties over the last 50 years is understandable. The longer Nationalism exercised a monopoly of Catholic political expression, the tighter was drawn the knot closing Ulster's political universe.

In fact, after the Second World War, fissures gradually began to appear in the Nationalist bloc. The first occurred in the Belfast industrial area with the rise of the Northern Ireland Labour Party. The basis for this fissure lay in the failure of the Nationalist Party to duplicate effectively the urban integrative mechanisms of the Unionist Party. The AOH became progressively less a working class Northern institution, and more

a middle class Southern one; indeed, it eventually became merely the institutional base of the Catholic Church in Fianna Fail, the ruling conservative party in the South ("Soldiers of Destiny"). Thus while Belfast Catholic workers gradually ceased to regard the Church as the primary cultural focus in the urban setting, they escaped from Nationalist control—a control which was in any case far less dynamic and more lethargic than its Unionist counterpart. The extent of this defection can be measured by the fact that the Nationalist Party has not contested at Belfast seat in local or national elections in the last decade.

In Belfast, the initiative was then captured from the Northern Ireland Labour Party by the Republican Labour Party, differentiated from the NILP by its opposition to partition, its greater degree of militancy, and its occasional appeal to Catholic sectarianism. The strength of its base amongst the Belfast Catholic working class derives precisely from this combination of the two fissuring strains on traditional Nationalism, with which we are concerned—labour politics and republicanism.

In most areas of Ireland, Nationalism was superseded by Republicanism long ago. In Ulster, however, Nationalism maintained its rural grip because of the relation of the Catholic minority to a significantly different political and institutional complex. However, large numbers of small farmers and small-town poor felt the same attraction towards Republicanism as their Southern compatriots. Republicanism thus succeeded in capturing the militant resentment of these impoverished groups, and identified the cause of their plight as imperialism with straightforward simplicity. But the abstractness of its ideology and its absence of any analysis of the imperialist enemy allowed contradictory political tendencies and economic interests to co-exist within it. Like the labour movement, it too represented an attempt to escape from the dialectic of minorities towards secular politics, but unlike the labour movement it only managed to impose a formal secularism from the outside on the traditional dialectic. The Labour movement on the other hand, as represented by the Trade Unions and the NILP, has had a *naturally* secular social basis but has never been able to move effectively into the political universe, and has systematically displayed a tendency to be squeezed from it when tension has been marked. Whereas the Labour movement has usually been able to retain an economist base in the trade union struggle even in times of sectarian conflict, the Republican movement conversely managed to retain its organizational base in the rural areas even when it became quite clear that its insurrectionary tactics had failed, for despite the defeat of the IRA campaigns, its organization still exists in the countryside, and with it the later militancy it embodies.

Thus, by the mid '60's Labour and Republican politics had detached segments of the Nationalist bloc in town and country, but had ceased to be active challenges to its central domination of the majority of the Catholic population. Both co-existed on its flanks, rather than challenging it frontally for the allegiance of its supporters. Reaction, Orange and Green, continued to hold Ulster imprisoned in the past.

The Crisis Erupts

At the beginning of 1968, Ulster was deceptively quiet. It seemed as

the petrified political system of Unionism had never been stronger. In fact, beneath the surface, the conditions for a major crisis had been accumulating, and were near to explosion.

The post-war boom had been particularly important in Northern Ireland. A stable unemployment rate of 10 per cent was more than halved as work in the engineering, shipbuilding and textile industries reached a peak. This more than compensated for a slight run-down in the aeronautics plants. By the mid '50's, when this boom was beginning to ease off, the Chandos Development Council was set up with the primary aim of encouraging new industrial construction, modernization and investment. Chandos claimed at its inception that 'The back of unemployment will be broken in nine months.' He could hardly have been more wrong. The increasing antiquation of Ulster's industry was not remedied, but soon intensified. For this was the year of the first major post-war credit-squeeze, which strangled the large outlays of public money in Ulster by depriving it of the complementary British and foreign capital it needed. Thus 'development' simply became subsidization, revealing the contradictions of imperial control. Within the last few years credit has been even more drastically reduced, and the unmodernized industries have become largely unmodernizable.

Areas of Ulster's industry are frequently held down to protect British business, but the remainder never receives sufficient support to counter this retardation. What capital is accumulated is rarely re-invested in Ulster: in 1962 it had £420,000,000 worth of capital invested beyond its borders, while simultaneously it was receiving an annual subsidy of £100,000,000. Where 'rationalization' has taken place, it has produced centralization (Belfastization) of industry so that it would be better placed for trade with Britain. This had led to a denudation of the areas west of the River Bann, with the highest density of Catholic population. The balance of payments has been periodically adjusted by cuts in purchasing power. The result has been chronic unemployment and the creation of a high emigration rate, both of which are felt particularly severely in the run-down Catholic western areas. In County Derry, the unemployment figure sometimes rises above 25 per cent. The Protestant working class too, it will be seen, has been affected by the faltering of Orange capitalism; but the impact has been considerably sharper on the Catholic proletariat. Thus in the last few years, the Catholic workers and peasants in Ulster have suffered a bitter relative deprivation within a declining economy.

At the same time, Catholic middle-class political and economic expectations have been systematically frustrated. There is no outlet of political expression for them, and no upward social mobility is available either. Rates of Catholic employment in local and central government, for example, are 12 per cent and 6 per cent respectively. Only 4 per cent of those who earn £2,000 a year are Catholics. The Catholic professional class almost entirely serves its own segregated community, and has very little contact with its Protestant counter-parts. Nationalism had proved wholly ineffective in advancing their interests. This group was becoming increasingly frustrated and determined to act on its own account.

Simultaneously, another social group became politically awakened, this time a newcomer to Ulster politics—the students. To understand the role of the students in Northern Ireland, it is important to emphasize that Queen's University, Belfast, is one of the very few unsegregated institutions of any description in Ulster. This meant that it provided a natural base from which an attack on sectarianism could be launched. Moreover, Queen's University is decisively not a regulative institution of entry into the Ulster ruling class. The children of this group are sent to English schools and thence to Sandhurst, Oxbridge or Trinity College, Dublin. Queen's students, on the other hand, are overwhelmingly middle and petit-bourgeois, whose ties to the ruling bloc are consequently not organic. Accession to the university potentially separated them from their religious and cultural backgrounds, liberating them from the home and hence, quite frequently, from inherited piety and bigotry. The preconditions for political radicalism thus existed. Mobilized first against the considerable political repression within Queen's University, the tumultuous international events of 1968 provided both inspiration and example. The world-wide wave of student revolt could not but have a violent impact on the one student group in the British Isles daily confronted with the repressive paraphernalia of a police state.

The Civil Rights movement was thus born of a confluence of radicalized students, a discontented middle class and the sufferings of the poor in both town and country. The elementary demand for One man—One vote threatens Unionism in all areas where Catholics have a majority; the spectre of retribution appears everywhere west of the Bann. The first Civil Rights march at Dungannon in August 1968 was promptly banned from the town centre, on the grounds that it was a 'loyalist' stronghold. In October a police riot followed a demonstration in Derry; squads of the Royal Ulster Constabulary rampaged through the Catholic ghetto venting their hatred on both workers and their homes. In January a similar epilogue followed a seventy-two mile student march from Belfast: this time the people of the ghetto replied to the R.U.C. with barricades and petrol bombs. For a few days, Bogside in Derry became a liberated zone, off limits to the Unionist state: workers erected barricades, created their own militia, their own general assembly, their own radio station, declared themselves a free city. Further militant demonstrations and occupations occurred in Newry, where the armoured transport of the police was captured and destroyed by local militants. Within three or four months, the Civil Rights movement had shattered the whole equilibrium of Ulster society and unleashed multiple contradictions within it. There has been a permanent political crisis ever since.

Impact on Unionism

The immediate result of the Civil Rights movement was to dynamite the compact Unionist bloc which had dominated Ulster for 90 years. The contradictions within it now, at long last, began to explode. This became evident in the very first days of the crisis, when tension between Prime Minister O'Neill and Home Minister Craig built up. Simultaneously, the violent agitation of Paisley, a low-church Pro-

testament minister who had won some prominence previous to the Civil Rights movement, now became one of the central forces in Ulster politics. The bourgeois press in Britain has represented these contradictions within the Unionist bloc in the usual inane fashion as a conflict between 'moderation' (O'Neill) and 'extremism' (variously Paisley or Craig). These moralistic notions of bourgeois-democratic politics have no meaning in Ulster. They are empty categories, which must be replaced with a concrete analysis of the different social forces at work.

The Unionist Party has classically been led by landed capital. Terence O'Neill, scion of the oldest recorded family in the British Isles, symbolizes this tradition. Confronted with the threat of the Civil Rights movement, O'Neill reacted by a bid to confuse opposition with vague promises of gradual reform; he also warned of the danger of any UDR for Ulster's industry (to revive Home Rule fears). This gentlemanly scheme of stabilizing the status quo by 'modernizing' it with some formal concessions undoubtedly reflected what the landlord class took to be the correct consensual position within the Unionist Party. It suffered, however, a rude shock. Under the impact of the Civil Rights threat, the five-class bloc of Unionism was disintegrating. Two separate, but related revolts have occurred within it—best represented by the respective figures of Paisley and Faulkner. Since Paisley's rise to fame was the precondition of the separate defection of Faulkner and his associates, it is necessary to discuss Paisleyism first.

Paisleyism : The Petit-Bourgeoisie unleashed

In a word, Paisleyism is the revolt of the Orange petit-bourgeoisie against the Unionist oligarchy. It is a revolt which has succeeded in mobilizing numbers of Protestant workers, peasants and unemployed. In its class character, it thus bears considerable resemblance to fascism. A comparison with fascism, indeed, may help to distinguish it as a phenomenon.

Fascism usually arises in a situation of economic dislocation and political crisis. This combination is typified by a threat from the Left (the presence of a mass revolutionary party) and a weakening of the bourgeois-democratic state. It is often concomitant with an attack by the ruling class. Fascism then unites big capital and an enraged petit-bourgeoisie, who provide its shock troops and mobilize lumpen elements behind them.

Ulster, it is true, is not in a condition of complete economic dislocation (through which the petit-bourgeoisie is threatened with extinction by inflation and big capital with international liquidation). Nevertheless, Ulster has now been in what would elsewhere be taken for a depression for some years, although because of its special position, depression has become stabilized into a kind of normalcy. Secondly, the rise of the Civil Rights movement is in Ulster something like an equivalent to the threat of a revolutionary labour movement elsewhere, and has provoked a political crisis in the Unionist state (which, of course, has never been a liberal-democratic one anyway). Thirdly, it is evident that Paisleyism recruits from those social groups which were the militants of the mass

fascist movements on the Continent: petit-bourgeois and *declassés*. In Ulster, declassed elements in the usual sense are very noticeable. Each year, 2,000 of them leave the countryside for the cities, and it is probable that a good proportion of the Protestants among them are won to Paisleyism. Lastly, however, and this is crucial, it cannot yet be said that this essentially petit-bourgeois movement has been adopted by big capital in Ulster—although, as will be seen, it has had an enormous effect on the politics of Orange businessmen.

Paisley's militants are largely recruited from urban youth. This group has been subjected to cultural isolation and impoverishment, as well as to segregation. The permanence of depression and unemployment has meant that youth has not—as in most of Western Europe and North America—emerged as a distinct consumer group. Both this poverty and the strength of sectarianism have meant that 'youth culture' has passed it by. Indeed, mass communications have largely passed it by too. The organization of both education and entertainment is on a religious basis. Group identifications fall back on local sectarian loyalties: 'We are told that the various juvenile gangs, such as the "Loney's" from Pound Loney, the "Marketers" and the "Ivy Boys" from the Lower Ravenhill area use a question about religion as a kind of password.'⁷ At the same time, much of Paisley's support derives from the Protestant unemployed, whose opposition to Civil Rights has an apparent economic rationality for them, in so far as simple religious equality in the present economic situation might mean for them permanent exclusion from production. In the Western areas, Protestants frequently provide services in Catholic districts, and fear for their property if there is any encroachment by 'popery'. In the countryside Protestants have traditionally been granted preference in sale and lease of land, and in the market for agricultural labour. Both these traditionalist groups intensely resent any 'threat' to Protestant religious 'freedom': whatever the Civil Rights movement demand politically, these groups are liable to interpret it as Republicanism or, more probably, Fenianism. Thus Paisley's form of amalgam is naturally attractive.

Paisley's methods of organization have close affinities with fascism—with some differences. The counter-revolutionary violence (the 'nailey' club) and para-militarism are the same. Its symbolism, however, is more traditional. Both Italian and German fascism created a frighteningly new symbolism, which was derived from the archaic, but departed from it radically in the functional advance towards the future. Paisley's symbols are resolutely retrospective: Union Jack, Orange Sash and Lambeg drum. The ideology which accompanies this paraphernalia is equally archaic. It relies largely on the stereotypes bequeathed long ago by the anti Home Rule campaign. The Catholic is dark, short, lazy and dirty, living in subsidized housing and drinking away his relief money. He is in every respect the negation of the Orange values of decency (by which the housewife, on finishing her housework, may be heard to say 'that looks more Protestant now').

It is in this ideological context that Paisley acquires his magnetism as a

⁷ *The Northern Ireland Problem*, D. Barrett and C. Carter, O.U.P. 1962, p. 76.

angel of retribution. He represents not only the ideals of the past, but hopes for the future—not only driving the enemy from the streets and exposing the 'betrayal' of ascendancy, but a better world for the Protestant poor. The earthly chord of this millenarian psalm may be found in the evocation of 'Civil Rights for Protestants' in his programmes and manifestoes. Outside Ulster, Paisley appears a neanderthal in the age of pragmatism. But to his own people, in Belfast or Ballymena, he seems a giant beside the mediocre O'Neill. In Bannside, he emerged as a plebeian tribune in a constituency previously untested—hence ignored—for twenty years.

For this is the final dimension of Paisleyism: it has exploited the genuine social resentments of the petit-bourgeoisie and poor against the alien landed class which has dominated Unionism for so long. Its radical rightism, initially aimed only at the Catholic minority, has now taken the demagogic form of a small man's revolt against the oligarchy. By splitting the petit-bourgeoisie and sections of the Protestant workers and peasants away from below, Paisleyism thereupon detonated a second split, in the Unionist bloc, from above.

From Craig to Faulkner: Business

The polarization on the streets between the Civil Rights movement and Paisleyism swiftly produced a division within the Cabinet at Stormont. Craig, the Home Minister, immediately saw that a powerful backlash could be created to the Civil Rights movement, provided its demands were misrepresented correctly. He could use this as a lever against O'Neill, without appearing to be deviating one iota from traditional Unionism. He merely had to denounce the Civil Rights movement as a threat to the Orange state as such—the traditional tactic used to contain the labour movement. But in the tense political crisis of late 1968, the objective logic of this was a change of positions between the two ruling groups within the Unionist bloc, displacing landed capital downwards in the name of a Protestantism its ancestors had created. The bourgeoisie which, as has been seen, had never achieved political dominance of the Unionist Party, could now at last make a bid for outright leadership.

In fact, Craig himself was not an acceptable leader for the business class in any challenge to the landowners. In some ways his past was insufficiently distanced from the latter, and in others he had failed to represent the former consistently. He could too easily be represented merely as brutal and primitive. The retrospective meaning of his defiance of O'Neill emerged, however, with the resignation of Faulkner, the Minister of Commerce. Faulkner, a perfect representative of local medium capital, was the ideal champion of the business class. This group already had serious grievances against O'Neill's economic mismanagement. In particular, expensive Stormont subsidies to attract investment to Ulster had been repeatedly spent by British firms in covering ground costs for a year or two, followed by a rapid exit with the capital accumulated meanwhile as clear profit. Added to this, of course, O'Neill's 'inability' to deal with the political crisis was now receiving world coverage, and investment was consequently in danger

of drying up. O'Neill lacked energy and ability; he had become increasingly remote and ambiguous. The moment was ideal for a challenge to his leadership.

The form of Faulkner's resignation—explicitly making verbal concessions to the Left (One man—One vote), while implicitly appealing to the Right (oust O'Neill)—revealed the tactical opportunism of his class very well, its determination to seize the moment to strike *within* the Orange system. Thereafter, Faulkner and his associates increasingly relied on a tacit alliance with Paisleyism in the fight against their common enemy. During the elections, the social cleavages within the Unionist bloc—hidden so well only a few months earlier—emerged dramatically. O'Neill mobilized the utmost resources of the landowning class, including its absentee notables resident in England, above all the Duke of Westminster: 'The Duke's campaign is only one part of the massive pro-O'Neill operation being mounted rapidly now in Ulster. Money is clearly no object. Aristocratic names are being tossed around freely by the Unionists, including the Duke of Abercorn, the Earl of Erne, to say nothing of lesser peers.'⁸ O'Neill was able to keep substantial support within the business community, which did not desert wholly to the Faulkner camp. Conversely, Faulkner and Craig were able to use a disgruntled clique within the landowning class (Brookeborough clan) against O'Neill. The fight became increasingly bitter, and it was eventually evident that O'Neill had succeeded in unnerving powerful sections of the business class with the vision of social disintegration that might follow his removal. Faulkner retaliated by whipping up pseudo-radical sentiment with social attacks on the oligarchy, similar in tone to those of Paisleyism: 'The great strength of the party is that in its local association the trade unionist counts for as much as the boss. Now we have landed gentry and big money imposing their candidates at will. It's totally undemocratic.' The results of the elections showed that O'Neill had lost massively in the power struggle within Unionism, but that neither of his antagonists had gained sufficiently to evict him immediately.

The composition of the Civil Rights movement

It must now be asked: what is the exact character of the Civil Rights movement which has such a devastating effect on the Unionist Party? Within it, two broad tendencies are distinguishable: first the Catholic bourgeoisie, and second an amorphous group of republicans, rural workers, urban proletariat and students. So far, these groups have only been separated by the militancy with which each has been willing to pursue the Civil Rights campaign, and the restraint they are prepared to exercise when confronted with the provocations of the state apparatus and Paisleyism. 'Civil Rights' appears *prima facie* to be a bourgeois slogan, a demand of the upper echelons of a segregated minority community for integration into the established order. Yet the most O'Neill could offer Catholic middle-class leaders in his temporary pre-election bid for their support was the possibility of future membership of the

⁸ *Sunday Telegraph*, February 9th.

Unionist Party and nothing more. In these circumstances, the middle-class leaders of the Civil Rights movement have not yet become divorced from the rank-and-file, despite the fundamental differences of class interest between them. For the rank-and-file, One man—One vote has very limited significance in itself; its importance is its link with One man—One job and One family—One house. For One man—One vote raises the household issue, as it is a demand relating to municipal franchise. The fact that households can be refused the vote means that the franchise is based on a clear class differentiation, at a level which directly involves the issue of discriminatory employment and housing. It is significant that the Civil Rights movement should have its spiritual home in Derry, for not only is Derry the city where Orange gerrymandering is most blatant, but it is a city which has traditionally lacked a clear working-class movement of any kind. This has allowed the presentation of the Civil Rights issue as a *civic* one, which at the same time contains clear working-class demands. Hence the relatively non-antagonistic nature of the composition of the movement in that area. Without the mass base there, the middle-classes elements in the Civil Rights movement would objectively be helpless.

This situation obviously creates great possibilities for the Marxist elements in the Civil Rights movement, at present mostly students in People's Democracy. For the students the Civil Rights movement has provided a potentially revolutionary role *because of an integration with the proletariat which no other student movement in Britain has accomplished*. Pitched directly into a confrontation with the State after the banning of the Republican Club in 1967 and their march on City Hall after the first Derry demonstration in late 1968, they have been greatly helped by their obvious credentials as a bona fide non-sectarian group. Clearly, there is a danger in their situation as a strolling revolutionary delegation within the miniscule territory of the six counties. This, however, has to some extent been offset by the existence of local organizational machinery made available to them by the Republicans, which has meant that they have not had to undertake most of the lengthy and painstaking preparatory work normally needed for students to create alliances with working people.

Ulsters' Political Future

The future will above all depend on whether the business class, which is today the crucial group in the Unionist political constellation, will decide to use the petit-bourgeois movement of Paisleyism to install a régime of violent repression: in which case, the classical combination that produced fascism in Europe would be formed. At all events, Paisleyism, which was formerly dependent for its respectability on the toleration granted it by the government, has now developed autonomously to a point where its strength demands toleration by Unionism. An alliance with Paisleyism might enable the Orange businessmen to by-pass O'Neill and landed capital altogether. Having used the Civil Rights crisis against the oligarchy, the business class could then contain the Civil Rights movement or drive it back along the old sectarian lines of Nationalism. The safest way of doing this would be to detach the

Catholic middle class and other reformist elements in the Civil Rights campaign with partial concessions, and then try to isolate the radical currents within the movement. Such an operation would mean an abandonment of Paisleyism, of course. But this might be a price worth paying, if it would 'normalize' the situation.

The goal of the Marxist Left within the Civil Rights movement, for its part, is clearly to win the Protestant working class away from the Unionist bloc and the Catholic working class in Belfast away from the ineffectual reformism of the labour movement there. Only when this is done will a unified socialist opposition emerge in Ulster, basing its unity on the *anti-capitalist* demands of One man-One job and One Family-One house. These provide the core of the programme necessary to fight the Civil Rights campaign through to its revolutionary logic and prevent it being blocked mid-way by bourgeois vacillations and defections. In the decrepit context of Orange capitalism, these demands have an explosively socialist meaning.

It will be noticed that the national question is missing from this programme. This is so for a very concrete reason. Although it cannot as such be neglected, any attempt to introduce it *in the old form* of pro or anti Partition would at present be disastrous to the project of creating a united working-class movement. In Ulster, a re-introduction of the partition issue into the forefront of politics would hold within it the danger of religious re-identification for Catholic participants, and regression for both Catholic and Protestant workers to the fixated impasse of the past. The Civil Rights movement now possesses a rural base in the western counties and an urban base in Derry; but it has made little or no inroads into Belfast, the industrial centre of the Ulster state and the key to future developments. Its main task is now to implant itself where the great bulk of the Northern proletariat is concentrated.

The best condition for the inevitable and necessary re-activation of the national question would be the eventual creation of a qualitatively different Republicanism south of the Border. There are some signs of this emerging with the leftward shift of Sinn Féin: Sinn Féin's position is now that the real Irish border divides the underdeveloped west from the industrialized east, not Green from Orange capitalism. If in the South a working class and small farmer's offensive was successfully launched, then the probability of the struggle in the North escaping the old definitions and identifications would be significantly increased. Meanwhile, the drive towards national self-determination should take the form of *concrete construction* of militant anti-capitalist movements North and South, rather than abstract elaboration in the programmes of the northern movement. The national question in Ireland has been so completely mystified and confused by religion that it cannot now be solved as a 'separate' issue, but only by class struggle to the finish in the north and south. There is no 'national bourgeoisie' in any part of Ireland today, ready to fight English imperialism and its economic grip on the whole island seriously. Ireland's inalienable right to self-

determination can and will only be exercised by its working class and peasantry. Proletarian power is the precondition of national independence.

April 7 1966

P.S. The replacement of O'Neill by Chichester-Clark, which occurred after the completion of this article, only confirms the main lines of its analysis. The extremely narrow vote by which Clark defeated Faulkner for the succession within the Unionist Party demonstrated increased strength for the business interests which Faulkner represents, but no change in the continuing hegemony of the traditional landowning elite.

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The People v. Standard Oil

Robert Avakian

A strike, when it is not a token tactical ploy in 'labour-management relations', is in many ways like a miniature revolution. Struggle, instead of collaboration, is the order of the day. The old individualistic ways of solving, blunting, or avoiding contradictions and confrontations give way to collective ways of facing them and fighting. Private property—at least that of the company and its scabs—ceases to be sacred. 'Law and order' is understood to mean maintaining—by brutal force if necessary—the very status quo that you yourself are now opposing.

A whole new set of values and assumptions grows up around this new experience. Former 'friends' turn into bitter enemies. New allies appear and are sought out among the ranks of those who were formerly feared and often fought against.

This is what we have been learning with and from the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) who are striking at the Standard Oil Refinery here in Richmond. When the strike began, as part of a nationwide walk-out against the whole oil industry, it appeared to be a rather routine squabble that would be marked by nothing more than formal picketing and would be over within a few weeks.

The union demands—a 72 cent wage increase (over two years) plus increased retirement and medical benefits—gave no indication that this fight was likely to take on serious political dimensions.

This notion was shattered almost immediately when police, first at the Shell plant in nearby Martinez, and then in Richmond at the gigantic Standard refinery, beat, maced and arrested oil workers and their wives and kids on the picket line. Some credit for heightening the contradiction is due to students from SDS who joined the picket line at Standard, helping to turn it from a harmless decoration to a real ob-

struction of the plant; and forcing Standard officials to call out the cops. But the union pickets readily accepted the student support and most held their ground when the cops moved in to bust up the line.

In reaction to the police strikebreaking a meeting of the County Central Labour Council was called and the delegates voted to confront the County Board of Supervisors and local city councils and threaten a general strike if the police brutality did not stop at once. This met with the usual run-around from the politicians who promised to 'study' the matter. While they were still studying, a couple of union pickets were arrested at the Standard refinery for allegedly throwing rocks at a scab truck (they were charged with violation of an obscure 'felony rock-throwing' which carries a mandatory one-year sentence). When Jake Jacobs, Secretary-Treasurer of the union local went down to bail the men out, he was stomped on and arrested by five of Richmond's finest.

A few days later Jacobs told the Richmond City Councilmen: 'I know there may be some honest and fair-minded cops on the Richmond police force, but those five who beat me up unnecessarily deserve to be called just what I hear other people calling the police these days: Pigs!' Earlier, Jacobs told these startled flunkies of Standard Oil, 'Many of us heard about the gestapo tactics in Chicago and other places, and we didn't believe it. But now we do.' And he added that, as a result of the support from students, he and other oil workers 'used to think that we disagreed with the students' philosophy, but now we're not so sure. But we do admire their courage'. A few days later, at a weekly union meeting, Jacobs said, 'I think a lot of us didn't support them over there (at San Francisco State) because we believed what we read in the newspapers. Now we know what kind of coverage we have been getting from the press, and I think we should be finding out what's happening from the people actually involved and we should be supporting them, just like they have supported us'.

He was referring mainly to the teachers at San Francisco State. But whereas the oil workers' local has officially endorsed the AFT strike—with its backdoor support for the Third World Liberation Front—Jacobs himself spoke at a rally backing both the students and teachers, and he issued a press statement calling for a 'Mutual aid pact' between teachers, students and oil workers.

Rank and File Position

The position of the rank-and-file oil workers on the student strike is more contradictory than the public stand assumed by Jacobs. Almost all the guys are gratified by the student support they have received, and even anti-student elements are forced to acknowledge that the massive turn-outs by students, on at least four occasions, have nearly forced the company to shut the giant refinery down and have introduced an aspect of uncertainty, which continually keeps the company off balance and fearing for its refinery. But racism is still rampant in the white working class, and the striking oil workers, many of whom have come a long way in a short time on this question, still have difficulty identifying with a student struggle led by black, brown and yellow

people and based on the needs of the Third World communities. Still, the direct contact between these workers and hundreds of students, some of them third world students, who have been mobilized to join the workers' picket lines; the joint confrontations, on several occasions, with the Richmond pigs; and the exchange of experiences and ideas have gone a long way towards overcoming the mutual ignorance and often contempt with which workers and students have looked at each other and their previously separate struggles.

Ironically, it has been the relative weakness of the union local—and the strong union-busting tendency of paternalistic Standard Oil—that has forced the workers to seek outside help. Many of the Richmond refinery workers were around during the last strike against Standard Oil, in 1948, when the company successfully crippled the OCAW and then divided the plant workers into about 10 unions—with contracts coming up at different times and 'no strike' clauses for the duration of each contract. So, during the current strike, a majority of the refinery workers are bowing to company pressure and crossing the OCAW picket lines. Many scabs are working 12 hour shifts and sleeping in the plant.

Many of the old-timers are quite candid in admitting that if the union had not voted nationally to go out against the oil industry, the Richmond workers would probably not have risked a fight with Standard. One older worker confided that it was the younger workers who have kept the strike going, with the help of the students. Many of these younger workers have long hair, wear beards, moustaches and sideburns, have spent time around Berkeley and a few have even participated in anti-war marches and Stop The Draft Week.

It is these younger workers who have stood up to the police and have twice engaged in pitched battle, clubs in hand, against a company goon squad, composed of lead pipe, wrench and chain-swinging foremen and supervisors. While most of the older workers may not actively involve themselves in these battles—or in the acts of sabotage against the plant, scabs, cars and trucks—the great majority of them approve of the militancy of the younger workers and recognize that, along with the students, the young turks have so far prevented the strike from turning into a disaster like the 1948 debacle.

To the Masses

In relating to the oil workers we have tried to follow Mao's principle on the mass line: 'from the masses, to the masses'. This means that, instead of reading the newspapers and trying to figure out what the feelings of the workers were, we spent as much time as possible every day on the picket lines, in the union halls and even in workers' homes, talking with them about the issues of the strike itself and the political implications of police intervention and city-council footshuffling. After we had a pretty clear idea of what the basic gripes of the workers were, we tried to tie them together in a concrete, coherent form and subject them to political analysis. The result was a leaflet headed, 'We ~~can~~ beat City Hall,' which reviewed the strikebreaking actions of the pigs and the

cover-up job of the local politicians and then explained: 'The big oil companies think they can get away with this because they have billions of dollars in combined assets and they are controlled by some of the most powerful corporation bigshots in the country—men who buy and sell politicians, judges and cops.'

The leaflet talked about the Rockefeller family and their operations through Standard and other companies in Africa and other parts of the world where they exploit the people and resources. Then the leaflet pointed out that, if a company as powerful as Standard was forced to call out the cops to break the strike, it proved that the workers themselves were a very powerful force and that despite all their capital 'without the workers they (the bosses) cannot make any profit at all'.

Finally, the leaflet pointed out that the tactics of the cops were exactly what black people faced all the time; and that the local police had warmed up for their strikebreaking brutality by cracking heads at San Francisco State. We included a clenched fist at the bottom of the leaflet, with the explanation that it symbolized solidarity.

There was mixed reaction to this first leaflet: most of the workers dug the part about Standard Oil, its assets, and its ability to meet the demands of the oil workers. But some of the guys were not prepared to accept our analysis that their bosses at Standard, 'are the same class of men who sit on the Boards of Trustees and Regents of the State Colleges and Universities and who own most of the land and property in the black ghettos. They are used to calling out the cops to smash down students and black people. And now they are turning these same police forces on more and more working people.'

Anti-Racism

We are more convinced than ever that, despite the resistance of many white workers—particularly older guys—to anti-racist agitation and propaganda, it is crucial to win white workers to struggle for black liberation. We point out to the white workers that white racism is one of the main weapons that the bosses turn on us. Many of the guys who are out on strike now can see this.

At the last union meeting, U. A. Porter, a black vice president of the local, read a letter the Executive Board had received from a scab who said he was not honouring the picket lines because the union had a 'nigger' in a position of leadership. Porter then talked about the racism he had encountered in the ranks of the union itself and how it was very harmful. He explained that racism in the union had made many black scabs for the company. (About 15 per cent of Standard's work force, and the same percentage of the OCAW local, is black—most of them hired in the last five years.)

Based on our contact with the workers and our discussion with them about our first leaflet, we put out a second leaflet titled '*This Is war*', which outlined the latest brutality by the Richmond pigs and went into more detail about the reasons for the bosses' hard line. We ran down

Standard's assets and profits again and pointed out that they could easily meet the oil workers' demands. Then the leaflet went into the nitty-gritty: 'Standard is willing to spend millions in order to beat the strike. It's not just that Standard's billionaire owners (headed by the Rockefeller family) are stingy. *They are out to bust the union.* That's exactly what Standard did in the last big strike in 1948, when they called out the cops to club and tear-gas pickets . . . In 1948, like today, the owners of capital had made a mess of the economy. Like always they tried to make working people pay for it. So they were faced with a wave of strikes, and they tried to save themselves by 'running away' to foreign countries where labour was cheaper and by smashing down militant leaders and unions in the labour movement here. But these crooks couldn't even manage their own economy and now they have created so much inflation that they are plotting to push taxes up, hold down wages, and lay more people off in order to save their skins. They know they can't get away with this if the labour movement is strong and working people are united. So they are out to bust us. To turn us from a fighting people, proud of our militant tradition, into shadows who jump at every command from the bosses and are willing to turn over to them more of the wealth we produce.'

Up the Ante

This leaflet went over very well: the workers recognized it as an expression of their own thoughts, in more systematic form. The union leadership picked up on several parts of our leaflet in speeches they made to the rank and file. At the end of the leaflet we called for three tactical steps to up the ante on Standard: a boycott of Standard products; a mass picket line outside the plant, and added pressure on the Labour Council to really pull off the general strike. Again, all three of these were ideas that came from the men on the picket lines themselves, and we simply tied them together and placed them in a context with the larger political and tactical questions surrounding the strike.

As a result of the militancy of the younger workers and the hang-tough attitude of most of the older guys, along with the mass support they have received and welcomed from the students, the odds are good that the union rather than the company will be strengthened by the strike.

Need to Unite Politically

While doing our best to help the workers win the strike, we have pointed out that unless we begin to unite politically to attack the whole system that the bosses run for their benefit, we will have to go through the same bitter fight two years from now, just to keep up with the cost of living. We have argued that we should take the offensive ourselves, and that to do this we will have to look for new allies—the students and most importantly the black people.

Several workers have told us that they used to support the pigs in the black community, but that now they understand what it's really like. One younger worker told me 'Last time there was a riot in North Richmond I was afraid to come to work; next time I'll be right there in

the riot.' And a wife of one of the pickets added: 'Yeah, we could really get something going if we got together with them black people.'

The important task for us is to develop this idea further and to build working-class organization that can carry on political struggle between strikes, so that the lessons of this mini-revolution are not lost. We are working with a group of the most advanced and militant guys in the union and with guys on the same level in other unions, to broaden and solidify our Solidarity Committee. Already several of the guys are taking leadership, and they have shown us the truth of Mao's statement that 'The masses have boundless creative power. They can organize themselves and concentrate on places and branches of work where they can give full play to their energy.'

In other words, they are in the best position to know what is crucial and what is bullshit; and once they make up their minds, they do not vacillate to lose interest. In working with these guys, and with the oil workers as a whole, we have tried to keep in mind Mao's basic instructions on how to become one with the people without getting lost among them: 'We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles into practice so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness.'

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Editorial Note

At our request, Louis Althusser has agreed to let us reproduce the following article, which was written in 1964 and published in the French Communist Party journal, La Nouvelle Critique.

Louis Althusser himself reckons that 'there is a danger that this text will be misunderstood, unless it is taken for what it then objectively was: a philosophical intervention urging members of the PCF to recognize the scientificity of psychoanalysis, of Freud's work, and the importance of Lacan's interpretation of it. Hence it was polemical, for psychoanalysis had been officially condemned in the 50's as "a reactionary ideology", and, despite some modification, this condemnation still dominated the situation when I wrote this article. This exceptional situation must be taken into account when the meaning of my interpretation is assessed today.'

Louis Althusser would also like to warn English readers that his article contains theses that must 'either be corrected, or expanded'.

'In particular, in the article Lacan's theory is presented in terms which, despite all precautions, have "culturalist" overtones (whereas Lacan's theory is profoundly anti-culturalist).

'On the other hand, the suggestions at the end of the article are correct and deserve a much extended treatment, that is, the discussion of the forms of familial ideology, and the crucial role they play in initiating the functioning of the instance that Freud called "the unconscious", but which should be rechristened as soon as a better term is found.

'This mention of the forms of familial ideology (the ideology of paternity-maternity-conjugality-infancy and their interactions) is crucial, for it implies the following conclusion—that Lacan could not express, given his theoretical formation—that is, that no theory of psychoanalysis can be produced without basing it on historical materialism (on which the theory of the formations of familial ideology depends, in the last instance).'

Letter from Louis Althusser to Ben Brewster,
February 21st 1969.
L.A.

Prefatory Note to 'Freud and Lacan'

Let us admit, without prevarication: anyone today who merely wants to understand Freud's revolutionary discovery, who wants to know what it means as well as just recognizing its existence, has to make a great theoretical and critical effort in order to cross the vast space of ideological prejudice that divides us from Freud. For not only has Freud's discovery been reduced, as we shall see, to disciplines which are essentially foreign to it (biology, psychology, sociology, philosophy); not only have many psychoanalysts (notably in the American school) become accomplices to this revisionism; but, more important, this revisionism has itself objectively assisted the fantastic ideological exploitation whose object and victim psycho-analysis has been. Not without good reason did French Marxists once (in 1948) denounce this exploitation as a 'reactionary ideology' which furnished arguments for the ideological struggle against Marxism, and a practical instrument for the intimidation and mystification of consciousnesses.

But today it must also be said that, in their own way, these same Marxists were directly or indirectly the first victims of the ideology they denounced; for they confused this ideology and Freud's revolutionary discovery, thereby adopting in practice the enemy's position, accepting his conditions and recognizing the image he had imposed on them as the supposed reality of psychoanalysis. The whole history of the relations between Marxism and psychoanalysis depends essentially on this confusion, this imposture.

That this was particularly difficult to avoid we can understand from the function of this ideology: the 'dominant' ideas, in this case, were playing their 'dominating' rôle to perfection, ruling unrecognized over the very minds that were trying to fight them. But it is also explained by

the existence of the psychoanalytic revisionism that made this exploitation possible: the fall into ideology began in fact with the fall of psychoanalysis into biologism, psychologism and sociologism.

We can also see that this revisionism could derive its authority from the ambiguity of some of Freud's concepts, for, like all inventors, Freud was forced to think his discovery in existing theoretical concepts, i.e., concepts designed for other purposes (was not Marx, too, forced to think his discovery in certain Hegelian concepts?). This will come as no surprise to anyone at all familiar with the history of new sciences—and at all careful to discern the irreducible element of a discovery and of its objects in the concepts in which it was expressed at its birth, but which, out-dated by the advance of knowledge, may later mask it.

So a return to Freud today demands:

1. Not only that we reject the ideological layers of the reactionary exploitation of Freud as a crude mystification;
2. but also that we avoid the more subtle ambiguities of psychoanalytic revisionism, sustained as they are by the prestige of certain more or less scientific disciplines;
3. and finally that we commit ourselves to a serious effort of historico-theoretical criticism in order to identify and define, in the concepts Freud had to use, the true *epistemological relation* between these concepts and their thought content.

Without this triple labour of ideological criticism (1,2) and epistemological elucidation (3), which, in France, has been initiated in practice by Lacan, Freud's discovery in its specificity will remain beyond our reach. And, more serious, we will take as Freud precisely what has been put within our reach, precisely what we aimed to reject (the reactionary ideological exploitation of Freud), or subscribed to more or less unconsciously (the different forms of bio-psycho-sociological revisionism). In either case, we would remain prisoners, at different levels, of the explicit or implicit categories of ideological exploitation and theoretical revisionism. Marxists, who know from their own experience the deformations Marx's enemies have imposed on his thought, can see why Freud could suffer the same fate, in his own way, and why an authentic 'return to Freud' is of such theoretical importance.

They will concede that if such a short article proposes to introduce a problem of this importance without betraying it, it must confine itself to the essential, it must situate the *object* of psycho-analysis so as to give a first definition of it, in concepts that allow its *localization*, the indispensable precondition for its elucidation. They will concede therefore that, as far as possible, these concepts should be introduced in a rigorous form, as in any scientific discipline; to vulgarize them in an over-approximate commentary would banalize them, while an analysis that really drew them out would require much more space.

An accurate assessment of these concepts can only come from the serious study of Freud and Lacan which each one of us can undertake; the same is true for the definition of the still unsolved problems of this theoretical discipline already rich in results and promises.

Freud and Lacan

Friends have correctly criticized me for discussing Lacan in three lines.¹ This was too much for what I was saying about him, and too little for the conclusions that I drew about him. They have asked me for a few words to justify both the allusion and its object. Here they are—a few words, where a book is needed.

In the history of Western Reason, every care, foresight, precaution and warning has been devoted to births. Pre-natal therapy is institutional. When a young science is born, the family circle is always ready for astonishment, jubilation and baptism. For a long time, every child, even the foundling, has been reputed the son of a father, and when it is a prodigy, the fathers would fight at the gate if it were not for the mother and the respect due to her. In our crowded world, a place is allocated for birth, a place is even allocated for the prediction of a birth: 'prospective'.

To my knowledge, the 19th century saw the birth of two or three children that were not expected: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. 'Natural' children, in the sense

that nature offends customs, principles, morality and good breeding: nature is the rule violated, the unmarried mother, hence the absence of a legal father. Western Reason makes a fatherless child pay heavily. Marx, Nietzsche and Freud had to foot the often terrible bill of survival: a price compounded of exclusion, condemnation, insult, poverty, hunger and death, or madness. I speak only of them (other unfortunates might be mentioned who lived their death sentences in colour, sound and poetry). I speak only of them because they were the births of sciences or of criticism.

That Freud knew poverty, calumny and persecution, that his spirit was well enough anchored to withstand, and interpret, all the insults of the age—these things may have something to do with certain of the limits and dead-ends of his genius. An examination of this point is probably premature. Let us instead consider Freud's solitude in his own times. I do not mean human solitude (he had teachers and friends, though he went hungry), I mean *theoretical* solitude. For when he wanted to think, i.e., to express in the form of a rigorous system of abstract concepts the extraordinary discovery that met him every day in his *practices*, search as he might for theoretical precedents, fathers in theory, he could find none. He had to cope with the following situation: to be himself his own father, to construct with his own craftsman's hands the theoretical space in which to situate his discovery, to weave with thread borrowed intuitively left and right the great net with which to catch in the depths of blind experience the teeming fish of the unconscious, which men call dumb because it speaks even while they sleep.

To express this in Kantian terms: Freud had to think his discovery and his practice in *imported* concepts, concepts borrowed from the thermodynamic physics then dominant, from the political economy and biology of his time. With no legal inheritance behind him—except for a parcel of philosophical concepts (consciousness, preconsciousness, unconsciousness, etc.) which were probably more of a hindrance than help as they were marked by a problematic of consciousness present even in its reservations—without any ancestral endowment whatever, his only forerunners writers—Sophocles, Shakespeare, Molière, Goethe—or proverbs, etc. Theoretically, Freud set up in business alone: producing his own 'home-made' concepts under the protection of imported concepts borrowed from the sciences as they existed, and it should be said, from within the horizons of the ideological world in which these concepts swam.

That is how Freud comes to us. A long series of profound texts, some times clear, sometimes obscure, often enigmatic and contradictory, problematic, and armed with concepts many of which seem to us at first sight to be out of date, inadequate for their content, or surpassed

¹ *Revue de l'Enseignement philosophique*, June-July 1963, 'Philosophie et sciences humaines', p. 7 and p. 11, n.14: 'Marx based his theory on the rejection of the myth of the "*homo oeconomicus*", Freud based his theory on the rejection of the myth of the "*homo psychologicus*". Lacan has seen and understood Freud's liberating rupture. He has understood it in the fullest sense of the term, taking it rigorously at its word and forcing it to produce its own consequences, without concessions or quarter. It may be that, like everyone else, he errs in the detail or even the choice of his philosophical bearings; but we owe him the *essential*.'

For today we cannot doubt the existence of this content: analytic practice itself, its effect.

So let us summarize the object Freud is for us:

1. A practice (the analytic cure). 2. A technique (the method of the cure) that gives rise to an abstract exposition with the appearance of a theory. 3. A theory which has a relation with the practice and the technique. This organic practical (1), technical (2) and theoretical (3) whole recalls the structure of every scientific discipline. *Formally*, what Freud gives us does have the structure of a science. Formally; for the difficulties of Freud's conceptual terminology, the sometimes material disproportion between his concepts and their content, suggest the question: in this organic practico-technico-theoretical whole do we have a whole that is truly stabilized and founded at the scientific level? In other words, is the theory really theory in the scientific sense? Or is it not, on the contrary, a simple transposition into theory of the methodology of the practice (the cure)? Hence the very common modern view that beneath its theoretical exterior (which we owe to worthy but vain pretensions of Freud himself), psychoanalysis remains a mere practice that does sometimes give results, but not always; a mere practice extended into a technique (rules of analytic method), but *without a theory*, at least without a true theory: what it calls theory being merely the blind technical concepts in which it reflects the rules of its practice; a mere practice without theory . . . perhaps then, even simply a kind of magic? that succeeds, like all magic, because of its prestige—and its prestige, applied to the fulfillment of a social need or demand, therefore its only justification, its real justification. Lévi-Strauss would then have theorized this *magic*, this *social* practice, psychoanalysis, by pointing out the *shaman* as the ancestor of Freud.

A practice pregnant with a half-silent theory? A practice proud or ashamed to be merely the social magic of modern times? What then is psychoanalysis?

I

Lacan's first word is to say: in principle, Freud founded a *science*. A new science which was the science of a new object: the unconscious.

A rigorous statement. If psychoanalysis is a science because it is the science of a distinct object, it is also a science with the structure of all sciences: it has a *theory* and a *technique* (method) that make possible the knowledge and transformation of its object in a specific *practice*. As in every authentically constituted science, the practice is not the absolute of the science but a theoretically subordinate moment; the moment in which theory, having become method (technique), comes into theoretical contact (knowledge) or practical contact (cure) with its specific object (the unconscious).

If this thesis is correct, analytical practice (the cure), which absorbs all the attention of those interpreters and philosophers eager for the intimacy of the confidential couple in which avowed sickness and professional medical secrecy exchange the sacred promises of intersubjectivity, does not contain the secrets of psychoanalysis; it only con-

tains one part of the reality of psychoanalysis, the part which exists in practice. It does not contain its theoretical secrets. If this thesis is correct, neither do technique and method contain the secrets of psychoanalysis, except as every method does, by delegation, not from practice but from theory. Only theory contains them, as in every scientific discipline.

In a hundred places in his work, Freud calls himself a theoretician; he compares psychoanalysis, as far as its scientificity is concerned, with the physical sciences that stem from Galileo, he repeats that practice (cure and analytical technique (analytical method) are only authentic because they are based on a scientific *theory*. Freud says time and again that : practice and a technique, even if they give results, do not deserve the name of science unless a theory gives them the right to it, not by mere declaration, but by rigorous proof.

Lacan's first word is to take these words literally. And to draw the conclusion: a return to Freud to seek out, distinguish and pin-point in him the theory from which all the rest, both practical and technical stems by right.

A return to Freud. Why this new return to the source? Lacan does not return to Freud as Husserl does to Galileo or Thales, to capture a birth at its birth—i.e., to achieve that religious philosophical preconception of purity, which like all water bubbling up out of the ground, is only pure at the very instant, the pure instant of its birth, in the pure passage from non-science to science. For Lacan, this passage is not pure, it is still impure: purity comes after the still 'muddy' passage (the invisible mud of its past suspended in the new-born water which pretends transparency, i.e., innocence). A return to Freud means: a return to the theory established, fixed and founded firmly in Freud himself, to the mature, reflected, supported and verified theory, to the advanced theory that has settled down in life (including practical life) to build it home, produce its method and give birth to its practice. The return to Freud is not a return to Freud's birth: but a return to his *maturity* Freud's youth, the moving passage from not-yet-science to science (the period of the relations with Charcot, Bernheim, Breuer, up to the *Studies in Hysteria*—1895) may indeed be of interest to us, but on a quite different level: as an example of the archaeology of a science—or as a negative index of immaturity, thereby precisely dating maturity and its arrival. The youth of a science is its prime of life; before this age it is old, its age the age of the preconceptions by which it lives, as a child does the preconceptions and hence the age of its parents.

Freudian Revisionism

That a young, and hence mature theory can relapse into childhood, i.e. into the preconceptions of its elders and their descendants, is proved by the whole history of psychoanalysis. This is the deeper meaning of the return to Freud proclaimed by Lacan. We must return to Freud to return to the maturity of Freudian theory, not to its childhood, but to its prime, which is its true youth—we must return to Freud beyond the theoretical childishness, the relapse into childhood in which all or :

part of contemporary psychoanalysis, particularly in America, savours the advantages of surrender.

This relapse into childhood has a name that phenomenologists will understand straight away: psychologism—or another that Marxists will understand straight away: pragmatism. The modern history of psychoanalysis illustrates Lacan's judgement. Western Reason (legal, religious, moral and political *as well as* scientific) will only agree to conclude a pact of peaceful co-existence with psychoanalysis after years of ignorance, contempt and insults—means that are still available anyway if all else fails—on condition of annexing it to its own sciences or myths: to psychology, whether behaviourist (Dalbiez), phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty) or existentialist (Sartre); to a more or less Jacksonian bio-neurology (By); to 'sociology' of the 'culturalist' or 'anthropological' type (dominant in the USA: Kardiner, Margaret Mead, etc); and to philosophy (cf. Sartre's 'existentialist psychoanalysis', Binswanger's *Daseinsanalyse*, etc.). To these confusions, to this mythologization of psychoanalysis, a discipline officially recognized at the price of compromise alliances sealed with *imaginary* ties of adoption but very real powers, some psychoanalysts have subscribed, only too happy to emerge at last from their theoretical ghetto, to be 'recognized' as full members of the great family of psychology, neurology, psychiatry, medicine, sociology, anthropology, philosophy—only too happy to certify their practical success with this 'theoretical' recognition which at last, after decades of insults and exile, confers on them citizen's rights in the world: the world of science, medicine and philosophy. They were not alerted to the suspicious side of this agreement, believing that the world was coming round to their positions—when they were themselves, with these honours, coming round to the world's positions—preferring its honours to its insults.

They thereby forgot that a science is only a science if it can claim a right to an object *of its own*—an object that is its own and its own *only*—not a mere foothold in an object loaned, conceded or abandoned by another science, one of the latter's 'aspects', the leavings that can be rehashed in the kitchen once the master of the house has eaten his fill. Concretely, if the whole of psychoanalysis is reduced to behaviourist or Pavlovian 'conditioning' in early childhood; if it is reduced to a dialectic of the *stages* which Freud's terminology designates oral, anal and genital, latency and puberty; if, finally, it is reduced to the primitive experience of the Hegelian struggle, of the phenomenological for-others, or of the Heideggerian 'gulf' of being; if all psychoanalysis is merely this art of assimilating the leavings of neurology, biology, psychology, anthropology and philosophy, what can it claim as its specific object, what really distinguishes it from these disciplines and makes it in the full sense a science?²

² The most dangerous of these temptations are those of *philosophy* (which gladly reduces the whole of psychoanalysis to the dual experience of the cure and thereby 'verifies' the themes of phenomenological intersubjectivity, of the existence-project, or more generally of personalism); of *psychology* which appropriates most of the categories of psychoanalysis as so many attributes of a 'subject' in which, manifestly, it sees no problem; finally, of *sociology* which comes to the aid of psychology by providing it with an objective content for the 'reality principle' (social and familial im-

Lacan and his Language

It is here that Lacan intervenes: he defends the irreducibility of analysis against these 'reductions' and deviations, which dominate most contemporary theoretical interpretations; he defends its irreducibility, which means *the irreducibility of its object*. That this defence requires an uncommon lucidity and firmness, sufficient to repulse all the voraciously hospitable assaults of the disciplines I have listed, can not be doubted by anyone who has ever in his life measured the need for security (theoretical, moral, social and economic), i.e. the uneasiness of corporations (whose statute is indissolubly scientific-professional-legal-economic) whose balance and comfort is threatened by the appearance of a unique discipline that forces them all to re-investigate not only their own disciplines but the reasons why they believe in them i.e., to doubt them, by the appearance of a science which, however little it is believed, threatens to violate the existing frontiers and hence to alter the *status quo* of several disciplines. Hence the contained passion and passionate contention of Lacan's language, unable to live or survive except in a state of alert and accusation: the language of a man of the besieged vanguard, condemned by the crushing strength of the threatened structures and corporations to forestall their blows, or at least to feint a response to them before they are delivered, thus discouraging the opponents from crushing him beneath their assault. Hence also the often paradoxical resort to the security provided by philosophies completely foreign to his scientific undertaking (Hegel, Heidegger), as so many intimidating witnesses thrown in the faces of part of his audience to retain their respect; and as so many witnesses to a possible objectivity, the natural ally of his thought, to reassure or educate the rest. As this resort was almost indispensable to sustain a discourse addressed *from within* to the medical profession alone, one would have to ignore both the conceptual weakness of medical studies in general and the profound need for theory felt by the best medical men, to condemn it out of hand. And since I am dealing with his language, the language which is the sum total of his prestige for some of his audience ('the Gongora of psychoanalysis', 'the Grand Dragon', the great officiant of an esoteric cult in which gesture, hushedness and solemnity can constitute the ritual of a real communication—or of a quite 'Parisian' fascination)—and for the rest (above all scholars or philosophers) his 'artifice', his strangeness and his 'hermeticism', it is clear that it bears some relation to the conditions of his practice as a teacher: since he has to teach the theory of the unconscious to doctors, analysts or analysands, in the rhetoric of his speech Lacan provides them with a dumb-show equivalent of the language of the unconscious (which, as is well-known, is in its ultimate essence '*Witz*', successful or unsuccessful pun and metaphor): the equivalent of the lived experience of their practice, whether as analyst or as analysand.

peratives) which the 'subject' need only 'internalize' to be armed with a 'super-ego' and the corresponding categories. Thus subordinated to psychology or sociology psychoanalysis is usually reduced to a technique of 'emotional' or 'affective' re-adaptation, or to a re-education of the 'relational function', neither of which have anything to do with its real object—but which unfortunately respond to a major demand, and what is more, to a demand that is highly tendentious in the contemporary world. Through this bias, psychoanalysis has become an article of mass consumption in modern culture, i.e., in modern ideology.

An understanding of this language's ideological and educational preconditions—i.e., the ability to maintain the distance of historical and theoretical 'exteriority' from its pedagogic 'interiority'—is enough to let us discern its objective meaning and scope—and recognize its basic proposal: to give Freud's discovery its measure in theoretical concepts by defining as rigorously as is possible today the *unconscious* and its 'laws', its whole object.

II

What is the *object* of psychoanalysis? It is *what* analytical technique deals with in the analytical practice of the cure, i.e., not the cure itself, not that supposedly dual system which is tailor-made for any phenomenology or morality—but the '*effects*', prolonged into the surviving adult, of the extraordinary adventure which from birth to the liquidation of the Oedipal phase transforms a small animal conceived by a man and a woman into a small human child...

One of the '*effects*' of the humanization of the small biological creature that results from human parturition: there in its place is the object of psychoanalysis, an object which has a simple name: *the unconscious*'

That this small biological being survives, and not as a 'wolf-child, that has become a little wolf or bear (as displayed in the princely courts of the eighteenth century), but as a *human child* (having escaped all childhood deaths, many of which are human deaths, deaths punishing the failure of humanization), that is the test all adult men have passed: they are the *never forgetful* witnesses, and very often the victims, of this victory, bearing in their most hidden, i.e., in their most clamorous parts, the wounds, weaknesses and stiffnesses that result from this struggle for human life or death. Some, the majority, have emerged more or less unscathed—or at least, give this out to be the case; many of these veterans bear the marks throughout their lives; some will die from their fight, though at some remove, the old wounds suddenly opening again in psychotic explosion, in madness, the ultimate compulsion of a 'negative therapeutic reaction'; others, more numerous, as 'normally' as you like, in the guise of an 'organic' decay. Humanity only inscribes its official deaths on its war memorials: those who were able to die on time, i.e., late, as men, in human wars in which only *human* wolves and gods tear and sacrifice one another. In its sole survivors, psychoanalysis is concerned with another struggle, with the only war without memoirs or memorials, the war humanity pretends it has never declared, the war it always thinks it has won in advance, simply because humanity is nothing but surviving this war, living and bearing children as culture in human culture: a war which is continually declared in each of its sons, who, projected, deformed and rejected, are required, each by himself in solitude and against death, to take the long forced march which makes mammiferous larvae into human children, *masculine* or *feminine* subjects.

This object is no business of the biologist's: this story is certainly not biologically—since from the beginning it is completely dominated by the constraint of the sexed human order that each mother engraves on the small human animal in maternal 'love' or hatred. History, 'socio-

logy' or anthropology have no business here, and this is no surprise! for they deal with society and therefore with culture, i.e., with what is no longer this small animal—which only becomes human-sexual by crossing the infinite divide that separates life from humanity, the biological from the historical, 'nature' from 'culture'. Psychology is lost here, and this is hardly strange for it thinks that in its 'object' it is dealing with some *human* 'nature' or 'non-nature', with the genesis of this existent identified and certified by culture itself (by the human)—when the object of psycho-analysis is the question with absolute priority, whether to be born or not to be (*nature ou n' être pas*), the aleatory abyss of the sexual-human itself in every human scion. Here 'philosophy' loses its bearings and its cover ('*repères*' and '*repaires*'), naturally!—for these unique origins rob it of the only origins it renders homage to for its existence: God, reason, consciousness, history and culture. It is clear that the object of psychoanalysis may be specific and that the modality of its material as well as the specificity of its 'mechanisms' (to use one of Freud's terms) are of quite another kind than the material and 'mechanisms' which are known to the biologist, the neurologist, the anthropologist, the sociologist, the psychologist and the philosopher. We need only recognize this specificity and hence the distinctness of the object that it derives from, in order to recognize the radical right of psychoanalysis to a specificity of its concepts in line with the specificity of its object: the unconscious and its effects.

III

Lacan would be the first to admit that his attempted theorization would have been impossible were it not for the emergence of a new science: *linguistics*. It is in the nature of the history of sciences that one science may often not become a science except by recourse to a detour through other sciences, not only sciences that existed at its baptism but also some new late-comer among sciences that needed time before it could be born. The temporary opacity of the shadow cast on Freudian theory by the model of Helmholtz and Maxwell's thermodynamic physics has been dispersed today by the light that structural linguistics throws on its object, making possible an intelligible approach to the object. Freud himself said that everything depended on language. Lacan makes this more precise: 'the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language.' In his first great work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (which is not anecdotal and superficial as is frequently suggested), Freud studied the 'mechanisms' and 'laws' of dreams, reducing their variants to two: *displacement* and *condensation*. Lacan recognized these as two essential figures of speech, called in linguistics metonymy and metaphor. Hence slips, failures, jokes and symptoms, like the elements of dreams themselves, became *Signifiers*, inscribed in the chain of an unconscious discourse, doubling silently, i.e., deafeningly, in the misrecognition of 'repression', the chain of the human subject's verbal discourse. Hence we were introduced to the paradox, formally familiar to linguistics, of a double yet single discourse, unconscious yet verbal, having for its double field only a single field, with no beyond except in itself: the field of the 'Signifying Chain'. Hence the most important acquisitions of de Saussure and of the linguistics that descends from him began to play a justified part in the understanding of the process

of the unconscious as well as that of the verbal discourse of the subject, and of their interrelationship, i.e., of their identical relation and non-relation, in other words, of their reduplication and disjuncture (*décalage*). Thereby philosophico-idealist interpretations of the unconscious as a second consciousness, of the unconscious as bad faith (Sartre), of the unconscious as the cankerous survival of a non-current structure or non-sense (Merleau-Ponty), all the interpretations of the unconscious as a biologico-archetypical 'id' (Jung) became what they were: not the beginnings of a theory but null 'theories', ideological misunderstandings.

It remained to define (I am forced into the crudest schematism, but how could I avoid it in such a short article?) the meaning of this *primacy* of the formal structure of language and its 'mechanisms' as they are encountered in the practice of analytical interpretation, as a function of the very foundations of this practice: its object, i.e., the 'effects' still present in the survivors of the forced 'humanization' of the small human animal into a *man* or a *woman*. This question cannot be answered merely by invoking the factual primacy of language as the sole object and means of analytical practice. Everything that happens in the cure does take place in and through language (including silence, its rhythms and scissions). But it is necessary to show *why* and *how* in principle the factual role of language in the cure as both raw material of analytic practice and means of production of its effects (the passage, as Lacan puts it, from an 'empty speech' to a 'full speech'), is only founded in fact in analytic practice because it is founded in *principle* in its object, the object that, in the last analysis, founds this practice and its technique: hence, since it is a science, in the *theory* of its object.

The Law of Order

Herein no doubt lies the most original aspect of Lacan's work, his discovery. Lacan has shown that this transition from (in the limit case) purely biological existence to human existence (the human child) is achieved within the Law of Order, the law I shall call the Law of Culture, and that this Law of Order is confounded in its *formal* essence with the order of language. What are we to understand by this formula, at first sight so enigmatic? Firstly, that the *whole of this transition* can only be grasped in terms of a recurrent language, as designated by the language of the adult or child in a *cure situation*, designated, assigned and localized within the law of language in which is established and presented all human order, i.e. every human rôle. Secondly, that in this assignment by the language of the cure appears the current, constant presence of the absolute effectiveness of order in the transition itself, of the Law of Culture in humanization.

To give some idea of this in a very few words, I shall indicate the two great moments of this *transition*. 1. The moment of the dual pre-Oedipal intercourse, in which the child, concerned with nothing but one alter-ego, the mother, who punctuates its life by her presence (*da!*) and absence (*fort!*),³ lives this dual intercourse in the mode of the imaginary

³ These are the two German expressions made famous by Freud, with which a small child under his observation sanctioned the appearance and disappearance of its mother by the manipulation of an arbitrary object that 'represented' her: a cotton-reel.

fascination of the ego, being itself *that* other, *any* other, *every* other, all *the others* of primary narcissistic identification, never able to take up the objectifying distance of the third vis-à-vis either the other or itself; 2. The Oedipal moment, in which a ternary structure emerges against the background of the dual structure, when the third (the father) intrudes on the imaginary satisfaction of dual fascination, overthrows its economy, destroys its fascinations, and introduces the child to what Lacan calls the Symbolic Order, the order of objectifying language that will finally allow him to say: I, you, he, she or it, that will therefore allow the small child to situate itself as a *human child* in a world of adult thirds.

Hence two great moments: 1. that of the imaginary (pre-Oedipal); 2. that of the symbolic (Oedipal resolution), or, to use a different language, that of objectivity recognized in its (symbolic) use, but not yet known (the knowledge of objectivity arising at a quite different 'age' and also from a quite different practice).

And the crucial point that Lacan has illuminated is this: these two moments are dominated, governed and marked by a single Law, the *Law of the Symbolic*. Even the moment of the imaginary, that, for clarity's sake, I have just presented as *preceding* the symbolic, as distinct from it—hence as the first moment in which the child *lives* its immediate intercourse with a human being (its mother) without recognizing it practically as the symbolic intercourse it is (i.e., as the intercourse of a small human child with a human mother)—*is marked and structured in its dialectic by the dialectic of the Symbolic Order itself*, i.e., by the dialectic of human Order, of the human norm (the norms of the temporal rhythms of feeding, hygiene, behaviour, of the concrete attitudes of recognition—the child's acceptance, rejection, yes and no being merely the small change, the *empirical* modalities of this constitutive Order, the Order of Law and of the Right of attributory or exclusory assignment), in the form of the Order of the signifier itself, i.e., in the form of an Order *formally* identical with the order of language.⁴

Where a superficial or prejudiced reading of Freud has only seen happy, lawless childhood, the paradise of 'polymorphous perversity', a kind of state of nature only punctuated by stages of a biological type linked with the functional primacy of some part of the human body, the site of a 'vital' need (oral, anal, genital),⁵ Lacan demonstrates the effective-

⁴ *Formally*: for the Law of Culture, which is first introduced as language and whose first form is language, is not exhausted by language; its content is the real kinship structures and the determinate ideological formations in which the persons inscribed in these structures live their functions. It is not enough to know that the Western family is patriarchal and exogamic (kinship structures)—we must also work out the ideological formations that govern paternity, maternity, conjugality and childhood: what are 'husband-and-wife-being', 'father-being', 'mother-being' and 'child-being' in the modern world? A mass of research remains to be done on these ideological formations. This is a task for *historical materialism*.

⁵ A branch of neuro-biology and psychology has been only too pleased to discover in Freud a theory of 'stages', and they have not hesitated to translate it directly and exhaustively into a theory of 'stadial growth', either neuro-biological or bio-neuro-psychological—mechanically assigning to neuro-biological growth the rôle of an 'essence' for which the Freudian 'stages' are merely the 'phenomena' pure and simple. This perspective is nothing but a re-edition of the old theory of mechanical parallelism. This is directed particularly towards the disciples of Wallon, for Wallon himself did not take any notice of Freud.

ness of the Order, the Law, that has been lying in wait for each infant born since before his birth, and seizes him before his first cry, assigning to him his place and rôle, and hence his fixed destination.

Each stage traversed by the sexed infant is traversed in the realm of Law, of the codes of human assignment, communication and non-communication; his 'satisfactions' bear the indelible and constitutive mark of the Law, of the claims of human Law, that, like all law, cannot be 'ignored' by anyone, least of all by those ignorant of it, but may be evaded or violated by everyone, above all by its most faithful adherents. That is why any reduction of childhood traumas to a balance of 'biological frustrations' alone, is in principle erroneous, since the Law that covers them, as a Law, abstracts from all contents, exists and acts as a Law only in and by this abstraction, and the infant submits to this rule and receives it from his first breath.⁶ This is the beginning, and has always been the beginning, even where there is no living father, of the official presence of the Father (who is Law), hence of the Order of the human signifier, i.e., of the Law of Culture: this discourse, the absolute precondition of any discourse, this discourse present at the top, i.e., absent in the depths, in all verbal discourse, the discourse of this Order, this discourse of the Other, of the great Third, which is this Order itself: *the discourse of the unconscious*. This gives us a hold, a *conceptual* hold on the unconscious, which is in each human being the absolute place where his particular discourse seeks its own place, seeks, misses, and in missing it, finds its own place, its own anchor to its place, in the imposition, imposture, complicity and denegation (*dénégation*) of its own imaginary fascinations.

⁶ There is a risk that the theoretical scope of this formal condition may be misconstrued, if this is countered by citing the apparently biological concepts (libido, affects, drives, desire) in which Freud thinks the 'content' of the unconscious. For example, when he says that the dream is a 'wish-fulfillment' (*Wunschbefriedigung*). The sense here is the same as the sense in which Lacan opposes man's 'empty speech' to his 'full speech', as to the language of unconscious 'desire'. But only on the basis of this formal condition do these (apparently biological) concepts obtain their authentic meaning, or can this meaning be assigned and thought and a curative technique defined and applied. Desire, the basic category of the unconscious, is only intelligible in its specificity as the sole meaning of the discourse of the human subject's unconscious: the meaning that emerges in and through the 'play' of the signifying chain which makes up the discourse of the unconscious. As such, 'desire' is marked by the structure that commands human development. As such, desire is radically distinct from organic and essentially biological 'need'. There is no essential continuity between organic need and unconscious desire, any more than there is between man's biological existence and his historical existence. Desire is determined in its ambiguous being (its 'failure-in-being'—*manque à être*—says Lacan) by the structure of the Order that imposes its mark on it and destines it for a placeless existence, the existence of repression, for its resources as well as for its disappointments. The specific reality of desire cannot be reached by way of organic need any more than the specific reality of historical existence can be reached by way of the biological existence of 'man'. On the contrary: just as it is the categories of history that allow us to define the specificity of man's historical existence, including some apparently purely biological determinations such as his 'needs' or demographic phenomena, by distinguishing his historical existence from a purely biological existence—similarly, it is the essential categories of the unconscious that allow us to grasp and define the very meaning of desire by distinguishing it from the biological realities that support it (exactly as biological existence supports historical existence) but neither *constitute*, nor *determine* it.

The Oedipal Phase

That in the Oedipal phase the sexed child becomes a sexed human child (man or woman) by testing its imaginary fantasm against the Symbolic, and if all 'goes well' finally becomes and accepts itself as what it is: a little boy or little girl among adults, with the rights of a child in this adult world, and, like all children, with the full *right* to become one day 'like daddy', i.e., a masculine human being with a wife (and no longer a mother), or 'like mummy', i.e., a feminine human being with a husband (and not just a father)—these things are only the destination of the long forced march towards human childhood.

That all the material of this ultimate drama is provided by a previously formed language, which, in the Oedipal phase, is centred and arranged wholly around the signifier *phallus*: the emblem of the Father, the emblem of right, of the Law, the fantasy image of all Right—this may seem astonishing or arbitrary, but all psychoanalysts attest to it as a fact of experience.

The last Oedipal stage, 'castration', shows us why. When the small boy lives and resolves the tragic and beneficial situation of castration, he accepts the fact that he *has not* the same Right (phallus) as his father, in particular, that he has not the same Right as his father over his mother, who is thereby revealed as endowed with the intolerable status of double use, mother for the small boy, wife for the father; but by accepting that he has not the same right as his father, he gains the assurance that one day, *later on*, when he grows up, he will get the right which is now refused him through his lack of 'means'. He has only a little right, which will grow big if he will grow big himself by taking care to 'mind his p's and q's' (*'manger sa soupe'*). For her part, when the little girl lives and assumes the tragic and beneficial situation of castration, she accepts that she has not the same right as her mother, and hence she doubly accepts that she has not the same right (phallus) as her father, since her mother has not this right (no phallus), although she is a woman, because she is a woman, and she simultaneously accepts that she has not the same right as her mother, i.e., that she is not yet a woman as her mother is. But she thereby gains in return her own small right: the right of a little girl, and the promise of a large right, the full right of a woman when she grows up, if she will grow up accepting the Law of Human Order, i.e., submitting to it if need be to deflect it—by not minding her p's and q's 'properly'.

In either case, whether it be the moment of dual fascination of the Imaginary [1] or the (Oedipal) moment of the lived recognition of the insertion into the Symbolic Order [2], the whole dialectic of the transition in all its essential details is stamped by the seal of Human Order, of the Symbolic, for which linguistics provides us with the *formal* laws, i.e., the *formal* concept.

Psychoanalytic theory can thus give us what makes each science no pure speculation but a science: the definition of the *formal* essence of its object, the precondition for any practical, technical application of it to its *concrete* objects. Thereby psychoanalytic theory escapes the classical

idealist antinomies formulated by Politzer for example, when, while demanding of psychoanalysis (whose revolutionary theoretical scope he was the first in France to realize) that it be a science of the true 'concrete', a 'concrete psychology', he attacked it for its *abstractions*: the unconscious, the Oedipus complex, the castration complex, etc. How, said Politzer, can psychoanalysis claim to be the science of the *concrete* it aims to be and could be, if it persists in *abstractions* which are merely the concrete alienated in an abstract and metaphysical psychology? In fact, no science can do without abstraction, even when, in its 'practice' (which is not, N.B., the theoretical practice of that science but the practice of its concrete *application*), it deals only with those peculiar and unique variants that constitute each individual 'drama'. As Lacan thinks them via Freud—and Lacan thinks nothing but Freud's concepts, giving them the form of our scientificity, the only scientificity there can be—the 'abstractions' of psychoanalysis are really the authentic scientific concepts of their object, in so far as, as concepts of their object, they contain within them the index, measure and basis for the necessity of their abstraction, i.e., the measure of their relation to the 'concrete', and hence of their specific relation to the concrete of their application, commonly called analytic practice (the cure).

So the Oedipal phase is not a hidden 'meaning' which merely lacks consciousness or speech—it is not a structure buried in the past that can always be restructured or surpassed by 'reactivating its meaning'; the Oedipus complex is the dramatic structure, the 'theatrical machine'⁷ imposed by the Law of Culture on every involuntary, conscripted candidate to humanity, a structure containing in itself not only the possibility of, but the necessity for the concrete variants in which it *exists*, for every individual who reaches its threshold, lives through it and survives it. In its application, in what is called its practice (the cure), psychoanalysis works on the concrete 'effects'⁸ of these variants, i.e., on the modality of the specific nexus in which the Oedipal transition was and is begun, completed, missed or eluded by some particular individual. These *variants* can be thought and known in their essence itself on the basis of the structure of the Oedipal *invariant*, precisely because this whole transition is marked from its beginnings in Fascination, in its most 'aberrant' as well as in its most 'normal' forms, by the Law of this structure, the ultimate form of access to the Symbolic within the Law of the Symbolic itself.

Freud and Historical Materialism

I know that these brief suggestions will not only appear to be, but are, summary and schematic; that a number of notions put forward here require extended development if they are to be justified and established. Even if their well-foundedness and the relations they bear to the set of

⁷ An expression of Lacan's ('*machine*'), referring to Freud ('*ein anderer Schauplatz*'... '*Schauplatz*'). From Politzer, who talks of 'drama' to Freud and Lacan who speak of theatre, stage, *mise en scène*, machinery, theatrical genre, *metteur en scène*, etc., there is all the distance between the spectator who takes himself for the theatre—and the theatre itself.

⁸ If this term 'effect' is examined in the context of a classical theory of causality, it reveals a conception of the continuing presence of the cause in its effects (cf. Spinoza).

notions that underly them were clarified, even if they were compared with the letter of Freud's analyses, they would pose their own problems in their turn: not only problems of conceptual formation, definition and clarification, but real new problems, necessarily produced by the development of the work of theorization we have just discussed. For example, how can we *rigorously* formulate the relation between the *formal* structure of language, the absolute precondition for the existence and intelligibility of the unconscious, on the one hand, the concrete kinship structures on the other, and finally the concrete ideological formations in which the specific functions implied by the kinship structures (paternity, maternity, childhood) are lived? Is it conceivable that the historical variation of these latter structures (kinship, ideology) might materially affect some or other aspect of the instances isolated by Freud? Or again, to what extent may the simple definition of the object and location of Freud's discovery, rationally conceived, react on the disciplines from which it distinguished itself (such as psychology, socio-psychology, sociology), and raise for them questions as to the (often problematic) status of their objects? And selecting one more from among so many possible questions: what relations are there between analytic theory and 1. the historical preconditions of its appearance, and 2. the social preconditions of its application?

1. *Who, then, was Freud, simultaneously* the founder of analytic theory and the inaugurator, as Analyst number one, *self-analyzed*, original Father, of the long line of practitioners who claim descent from him?

2. *Who, then, are the psychoanalysts, who simultaneously* (and as naturally as if it went without saying) accept Freudian theory, the theoretical tradition that descends from Freud, and the social and economic conditions (the social status of their 'associations' which cling tightly to the status of *medical* corporations) under which they practice? To what extent do the historical origins and socio-economic conditions of the practice of psychoanalysis react on analytical theory and technique? Most important of all, to what extent do the theoretical *silence* of psychoanalysts about these questions (for this is certainly the state of affairs) and the theoretical *repression* these problems meet with in the world of analysis, affect both analytical theory and analytical technique in their content itself? Cannot the eternal question of the 'end of analysis', among others, be related to this repression, i.e., to the *non-thoughtness of these problems* which derive from an epistemological history of psychoanalysis and a social (and ideological) history of the world of analysis?

Here are a number of real questions, really posed, and they constitute immediately an equal number of fields of research. It may be that in the near future certain notions will emerge transformed from this test.

And this test is rooted in the test Freud, in his own field, applied to a particular legal, ethical and philosophical (i.e., definitively ideological) image of 'man', of the human 'subject'. Not in vain did Freud sometimes compare the critical reception of his discovery with the upheavals of the Copernican Revolution. Since Copernicus, we have known that the earth is not the 'centre' of the universe. Since Marx, we have known that the human subject, the economic, political or philo-

sophical ego is not the 'centre' of history—and even, in opposition to the Philosophers of the Enlightenment and to Hegel, that history has no 'centre' but possesses a structure which has no necessary 'centre' except in ideological misrecognition. In turn, Freud has discovered for us that the real subject, the individual in his unique essence, has not the form of an 'ego', centred on the 'ego', on 'consciousness' or on 'existence'—whether this is the existence of the for-itself, of the body-proper or of 'behaviour'—that the human subject is de-centred, constituted by a structure which has no centre either, except in the imaginary misrecognition of the 'ego', i.e., in the ideological formations in which it 'recognizes' itself.

It must be clear that this has opened up one of the ways which may perhaps lead us some day to a better understanding of this *structure of misrecognition*, which is of particular concern for all investigations into ideology.

Jan. 1964 (corrected Feb. 1969).

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CHINA'S CONTINUING REVOLUTION

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Signs and Meaning in the Cinema

Sam Robdie

The existential value of the work of art, as a declaration about being, cannot be extracted from the adherent signals alone (its symbolism), nor from the self-signals alone (the medium). The self-signals taken alone prove only existence; adherent signals taken in isolation prove only the presence of meaning...

Recent movements in artistic practice stress self-signals alone, as in abstract expressionism; conversely, recent art scholarship has stressed adherent signals alone, as in iconography...

George Kubler (1962)¹

Movies can be located on a scale, abstract expressionism to absolute naturalism. The one, composed of self-signals alone, has as subject the medium itself. The other stresses content above form, technique only as a means—adherent signals predominate. Hollywood movies come near to this end of the scale, one reason for traditional contempt—‘... the misguided efforts of the present-day film which imitates more or less successfully the pictorial composition of the old easel painting, its monocular vision and its picturesque settings.’ (Moholy-Nagy, 1965)²

Moholy-Nagy held an extreme view, though one still worth recalling...

‘Like all other means of expression, the film with its characteristic visual, perceptual elements appeals directly to the senses. This is the basic departure of abstract motion pictures. The development of the category of film will increase in importance if the means are found necessary for its appeal. The same is true of the direct psychophysical response to color without any naturalistic theme. It is safe to predict for the film an increasing use of pure colors as in non-objective paintings. The recognition of this trend and its possibilities is essential if we are to find a healthy escape from the present deluge of trashy colored motion pictures.’

Any defence of the Hollywood movie in this context would stress necessarily a contrary naturalist aesthetic as *the* aesthetic of the cinema. It would be forced as well, as against ‘pure’ film, to attend to ‘meaning’ in thematic and narrative elements.

Post-war France, liberated by the Americans, where love of American films and the resistance became closely linked, provided the first

¹ George Kubler, 1962. *The Shape of Time*. Yale.

² L. Moholy-Nagy, 1965. *Vision in Motion*. New York.

serious sympathetic consideration of Hollywood movies in the figure of André Bazin and the *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Bazin and *Cahiers* formulated a suitable naturalist aesthetic and a theory which regarded Hollywood movies as works of individual directors, *auteurs*, writing, as it were, in film. The literary associations suggested in the very formula were significant—certain ‘literary’ thematic preoccupations of various directors were used as a key for making distinctions between them, as a primary tool for critical understanding.

Peter Wollen’s *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*,³ though critical of aspects of the *auteur* theory and the implications of a purely naturalist cinema aesthetic, is within this *Cahiers* tradition, and the book is perhaps the best example of it in this country.

Wollen has provided in the past often brilliant thematic analyses of Budd Boetticher, John Ford, Sam Fuller, Howard Hawks, Roberto Rossellini, Josef von Sternberg.⁴ But the analyses, however acute, lacked any coherent theoretical frame. The apparent need for theory, and his concern with themes, seems to have led naturally to a consideration of disciplines centring on the notion of messages, communication, and the nature of signs—anthropology, cybernetics, linguistics, semiology. *Signs and Meaning* is an attempt to distinguish critically these various grids and to apply them to the movies.

Wollen quotes Lévi-Strauss often, with evident approval, in justification of his own interests. ‘...myth functions “on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically in ‘taking off’ from the linguistic ground on which it keeps rolling.” *Mutatis mutandis*, the same is true of the *auteur* film.’

Wollen is here explaining the reason for his own preoccupation with the themes of directors and suggesting that the meaning of such themes might best be analysed by the methods of structural anthropology. But the association, movie-myth, needs to be examined, not simply assumed, particularly when used to ignore ‘linguistic’ elements peculiar to the cinema—composition, lighting, editing, music, staging, camera work, colour, etc. Lévi-Strauss has had to make a virtue of an ethnographic deficiency—no similar deficiency exists for the movies.

It is on the basis of methods borrowed from structural anthropology that Wollen distinguishes between directors and discovers the basis for a ranked Hollywood pantheon. He employs a structuralist decoding device—oppositional sets, binary bundles seen in relational patterns of transformation—to delineate the thematic preoccupations of John Ford and of Howard Hawks, and concludes: ‘Ford’s work is much richer than that of Hawks and . . . this is revealed by a structural analysis; it is the richness of the shifting relations between antinomies in Ford’s work that makes him a great artist, beyond being an undoubted *auteur*.’

Ford may well be artist and *auteur*, but the assertion is not proven by any

³ Secker & Warburg/British Film Institute, 1968.

⁴ See NLR Nos. 32, 29, 23, 24, 42 and 36 respectively.

demonstration of a shifting set of oppositions on the level of content banalities. There is nothing in Wollen's argument specific to the medium of the movies or the way in which Ford and Hawks handle that medium. Had they been literally authors their novels would have revealed the same binary bundles, the same cracker-barrel philosophic interests. Ford the thinker, has been presented, but not Ford the movie-maker.

Any film director will deal with certain set ideas, themes, motifs, often develop and enlarge these, but not all directors are equally good, nor are the films of individual directors equally good. Themes in themselves may help to distinguish between directors but need not necessarily make these directors distinguished. Yet, it is on the level of theme *alone*, the complexity of ideas, that Wollen ranks and judges directors.

The point being made here might be clarified by a brief glance at the movies of Nicholas Ray. Ray is obsessed with worlds within worlds, their boundaries, their separation, their non-communication—the under-world in the normal world; women in a male world; adolescents among adults; more abstractly, innocence caught in violence. His images are hospitals, prisons, ships, shacks, waiting rooms, deserted houses, cellars, planetariums—rooms within rooms, closed, narrow, enclosed worlds. Other images are of drawers, water glasses, doors, the interior space of cars—receptacles or passages, entrances between closed spaces. These worlds are linked by messages sent through messengers and pages or by telephones, the radio, the newspaper, microphones, loudspeakers, telegrams. Yet, in each instance institutional means of communication result in non-communication—muddled, distorted, misunderstood messages. These elements set off Ray's interests, preoccupations, thematic ideas, are part of his 'signature', but they do not alone make him a profound, or even very interesting film director.

Ray's lighting, colour, editing is perhaps more distinctive than his themes, certainly more peculiar to the movie medium. He uses lighting, particularly for interiors, in a wierd, almost surrealist manner, so that objects and people are made to stand out, a bit too much, as if slightly out of their world and surroundings. He chooses actors for roles not quite suitable for them so that they 'stick out' as he places them in situations not quite believable, slightly out-of-joint. It is possible to get involved in Ray's movies but as objects 'out there', lacking the immediacy of, say, Ford and the corresponding emotional response Ford can elicit. In a Ford movie things are always properly in context, but Ray makes everything jump out, slightly awry, draws attention to objects and faces by a slow-moving, analytic camera so that things are seen for the first time, in every aspect, rather too completely—the very texture of skin, material, hair can be felt.

Ray succeeds, cinematically, in separating the audience from the screen while keeping them involved. He uses the medium, as he uses the radio, telephone, newspaper in his movies, as something which isolates people, which confines them, which only ostensibly is a means for communication.

If structuralism is *the* key to cinematic understanding it needs to be used on various levels specific to the medium, and not on the simple, superficial level of theme alone. Wollen's assertions about Ford and about structuralism need to be tested by using the method to perceive 'shifting relations between antinomies' on the level of sound and image, the composition of images, the rhythm of editing, the relation of shots, of sequences, the use of colour, the choice of stars.

Following Andrew Sarris, Wollen has the 'cultural audacity to establish a pantheon for film directors' of American movies. In the high temple reside Chaplin, Ford, Fuller, Hawks, Hitchcock, Lang, Lubitsch, Ophüls, Sternberg, Welles. I do not quibble with Wollen's favourites, but only point out that they are *his* favourites and seem to be placed there for no critical reason, without any theoretical justification, save Wollen's personal taste and sensitivity.

That Wollen bothered at all is more than 'cultural audacity', indeed, the subjectivism it exhibits is at one with his entire method and 'theoretical' loyalties.

The *politique des auteurs* at its worst became a riotous archaeology—new directors were discovered each day. But there was a certain logic involved. The task of *Cahiers* was to oppose the view that all American films were more or less alike, not to be taken seriously, by pointing out that in fact American films were not all alike, were made by individual *auteurs* and had considerable merit. But once the task of distinguishing directors was made, other more aesthetic criteria had to be introduced to distinguish good from bad directors. Such criteria had to be on elements peculiar to the cinema, not simply on the basis of thematic preoccupations. For if one remains at the level of thematic preoccupations *the only* critical tool left is one's own subjective taste.

The object of communications theory is to reduce messages to their simplest and most economic terms in order efficiently to convey them, to convert them to a form easily transferred to the hardware of computers, telecommunications. The theory is a recognition of a natural universal tendency towards chaos, disruption, noise, and an attempt to control such entropy in order to maintain the minimal necessary structure of messages to ensure communication. The theory might contain aesthetic implications, but is itself a *conservative* framework centring on control, reduction, efficiency, economy. It has been fruitful, particularly for music, but less in application than for its insight into the probabilist structure of messages, the impossibility of total control, the presence of random elements. What communications theory has fought against, certain of the arts have emphasized.

The attempt to decode or perceive artistic productions in terms of a computer-like binary system is more an exercise of control, reduction, impoverishment than it is an understanding of the aesthetic work. Art does involve the cultural ordering of nature but proceeds by a de-differentiation of order. Modern art particularly seeks to introduce, or at least not inhibit, the presence of random, uncontrolled elements.

Structural linguistics, and the anthropology derived from it, concentrate on the most stable, ordered, structured human inventions—myth and language. Language, because it is the primary means of social communication, changes at a fixed and ordered rate which can be precisely defined and predicted. Communications theory is an artificial attempt to do for messages what language already naturally does—reduce noise and impose order.

Wollen, 'in theory', recognizes the inadequacy of such reductive grids for the movies, but, 'in practice', he uses them—one reason why his theoretical section on semiology fails to result in any cinematic analytic concepts.

Semiology, in its concern with the relation nature—culture for the construction of messages, is necessarily an aesthetic theory. Wollen points out the connection—how any particular semiotic determines one's aesthetic. And he criticises, rightly, the one-sided 'naturalist' aesthetic of Bazin and Metz when applied to the cinema, and the equally one-sided aesthetic based on the arbitrary symbolic nature of the sign, derived from the linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure.

But the result of this critique of theories is no theory at all, at least none applicable with any kind of precision to the movies. The aesthetic richness of the cinema springs from the fact that it comprises all three dimensions of the sign: indexical, iconic and symbolic. The great weakness of almost all those who have written about the cinema is that they have taken one of these dimensions, made it the ground of their aesthetic, the "essential" dimension of the cinematic sign, and discarded the rest. This is to impoverish the cinema.'

What is left is an implied eulogy to Jean-Luc Godard because of his cinematic eclecticism, *because* his movies include happily all three dimensions of Charles Pierce's morphology of the sign. And 'in practice' what remains is Wollen's application of a structuralist grid to the themes of *auteurs*—an impoverishment of the movies, and of the theory.

Comment

Ben Brewster

Sam Rohdie's review of *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* makes a number of telling and important criticisms, but I should like to append this comment since it seems to me that on one simple point he has missed the author's intention, and, more seriously, in certain respects he has failed to grasp the main themes that underlie the book.

First, the simple point; Sam Rohdie completely misunderstands the function of the Pantheon of directors at the end of the book, and the general attitude assumed in the book to evaluative critical judgements

The conventional definition of criticism is the establishment of standards of excellence in an artistic field, but a trend of modern criticism, to which Peter Wollen's book clearly belongs, is concerned with something quite different, viz., the establishment of the semantic field of an art, of the poetic, the artistic, and, in this case, the cinematic. But in this attempt to establish not what is good cinematically, but what is cinematic, value judgements constantly intrude on scientific statements, if only because there is a tendency to regard what is *most* cinematic as what is cinematically *good*. Sam Rohdie points out several incautious evaluative statements in Peter Wollen's book. He then attacks the cinematic Pantheon in the appendix on the grounds that it cannot be derived from the scientific analysis, it is 'merely' Peter Wollen's personal taste. This is simply to misconstrue the purpose of the Pantheon. There is a classical (if ultimately unsatisfactory) provisional solution to the problem of fact and value, and that is to let the reader know the author's prejudices explicitly, so that he can judge for himself. The function of the Pantheon is precisely this: unlike Andrew Sarris' original, it is not an attempt to *found* a cinematic *pris de position*, it is quite simply a warning to the reader of the author's personal taste in films. The Pantheon and the evaluative comparison of Hawks and Ford are not evidence of the same tendency to draw illegitimate critical judgements: the former is there to prepare the reader in his assessment of the latter.

Secondly, the major confusion: the misconstruction of Peter Wollen's argument I have just discussed seems to have led Sam Rohdie away from the central concerns of the book. He claims that this 'error' of Peter Wollen's derives from his predilection for thematic analysis—analysis that could apply to any media, and that the book therefore runs wide of its own target, ignoring any specifically *cinematic* forms and concentrating on conventional literary content. In fact, Peter Wollen does discuss this form/content dichotomy in his distinction between *acteurs* and *metteurs en scène*, but as a subordinate issue. He is concerned with a dichotomy that is arguably more basic: the dichotomy of programme and performance.

To call for an aesthetics of film form is merely to end where Peter Wollen's book begins. He starts from the immediate problem facing anyone who attempts to provide a semantics of film: the cinema is a poly-aesthetic medium. The centrality of this problem explains the solidarity of the three apparently disparate chapters of the book. Eisenstein, the first great director who also concerned himself with cinematic semantics and aesthetics, posed this problem, but he could not solve it—within his framework poly-aesthetics became synaesthesia. Peter Wollen then sketches two solutions to this problem. He tries to establish a combinatory, multi-dimensional semantics for the cinema in the last chapter, and in the second, he tries to break away from the semantics of the film-object to discuss it essentially as one of the performing arts—the film in relation to its production and presentation.

Lessing (in the *Laokoon*) first clearly formulated the principles that an aesthetic discourse or representation differs semantically from a scientific

discourse or representation, and that different media differ semantically, and hence have different aesthetics. He also made the distinction between 'natural signs' as predominant in the semantics of the pictorial arts and 'arbitrary signs' as predominant in the literary arts. He believed that the drama was capable of fusing the two, but beyond this he did not go in discussing the semantic problems of combined media, and these are the problems that face the aesthetician of film. As the essay on Eisenstein shows, the Russian director's attempt to build an aesthetics of film foundered on this rock. Eisenstein found that the most *cinematic* of the devices open to the film-maker, *montage*, could bear little semantic weight, except in terms of its emotional effect (Kino-fist, etc.). With the advent of sound and colour, this stress on the emotional effect of the combined sensuous assault of the film led to a near-Wagnerian syn-aesthesia whose subjectivism allowed no scientific explanation. Recent discussion of this problem has concentrated on the possibility or impossibility of an aesthetic of 'natural signs', not just because French critics like American movies, but because this is the semantic problem raised by the medium and its peculiarities (writers such as Charles Barr and Galvano Della Volpe have investigated these problems, as well as Frenchmen such as Cristian Metz). Peter Wollen has attempted to change the terms of the problem by asserting that no sign is purely 'natural' or 'arbitrary' (an assertion Lessing would have approved), and by proposing Peirce's tripartite distinction in place of the traditional dual one. This semantics must be judged on its scientific merits, not by accusing it of reductionism and rigidification.

Sam Rohdie has grasped the basic terms of this analysis as exposed in the third chapter, but he has misunderstood its function in the book as a whole. This is probably because he has completely missed the most innovatory aspect of Peter Wollen's book, the reformulation of the *auteur* theory in terms of programme and performance. A second response to the problem of the poly-aesthesia of the cinema is to leave the purely semantic discussion of the film-object and discuss its context. Whatever the semantic content of the final work, its production and presentation can be discussed. This does not mean a discussion of the film industry, the social background, etc., but a discussion of the aesthetic preconditions. Instead of regarding the *auteur* as the psychological individual, the director, or his *Weltanschauung*, Peter Wollen suggests that the *auteur* be regarded as a kind of *ex post facto* 'score': a comparative analysis of the work of an *auteur* (potentially not even the director, but cameraman, script-writer, etc.) enables the critic to establish the model of which each of the individual films is one more or less adequate realization.

This new dimension immediately solves two of the problems Sam Rohdie raises. Although the examples Peter Wollen gives are thematic *auteurs*, and hence most amenable in semantic content to a traditional literary approach, it would be quite possible to construct an *auteur* programme for, say, Josef von Sternberg, which would concentrate on the 'pure film' aspects Sam Rohdie accuses Peter Wollen of being unable to deal with.

Another important corollary of this innovation is that it enables the

critic to deal with precisely the problems raised by the trend towards indeterminacy in the arts today which Sam Rohdie thinks Peter Wollen cannot discuss because of his constraining concern with communications theory. The 'dedifferentiation of order' which Rohdie sees in this phenomenon only occurs in the two-dimensional space of form and content ('self-signals/adherent signals') he confines himself to. The art that has taken indeterminacy to its extreme, to the point where the art-object has almost no semantic content left, is music, and this development has occurred precisely because music is the art where performance is predominant (less masked by illusion than in drama). These tendencies have only just begun to manifest themselves in film. However, an aesthetics must be able to deal with all the manifestations of an art. By adding a dimension to film criticism that it has hitherto lacked, Peter Wollen, far from cramping film criticism in a communications theory resistant to modern developments, has even forestalled probable artistic developments in the medium. No critic can be asked to do more.

To sum up: Sam Rohdie seem to believe that *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* is an attempt somehow to 'apply Lévi-Strauss to the movies'. He attacks this as reductionist and incapable of dealing with existing movies *qua* movies, or with likely future developments. On the contrary, if I am right, the new dimension Peter Wollen has introduced and Sam Rohdie has missed *enriches* film criticism and forestalls future developments. It follows that the aesthetic semantics discussed in the last chapter cannot restrict analysis, they merely make it more scientific.

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Introduction to Tukhachevsky

Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whose meteoric career illuminates certain episodes of the Soviet past that still have significance today, was born in Penza province of Czarist Russia in 1893. According to a colleague who knew him in the twenties, he came from an impoverished family of aristocrats, originally of Flemish descent: a crusading ancestor had ended near Odessa with a Turkish wife, and been granted lordship of the village of Tukhachev. Entering the Imperial Army at a very early age, Tukhachevsky fought the First World War as a lieutenant in the crack Semenovsky Guards Regiment. Captured by the Germans in 1915, he was incarcerated in the fortress of Ingolstadt: a fellow-prisoner was Charles de Gaulle. After five attempts at escape, he made his way to Petrograd, after the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917. Reportedly inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution and the Decembrists since his youth, he found no difficulty in entering the service of the Revolution. He joined the Bolshevik Party, and reported to Sklyansky, Trotsky's right-hand man at the Commissariat of War. Within a few months, he was given command of the famous First Red Army on the Eastern Front, facing the Czechoslovak Legion near Simbirsk. He revealed himself a brilliant officer, and was responsible for the decisive breakthrough that shattered Kolchak's line near Samara in May 1919, beginning an advance which rolled up the White Armies all the way to Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk within a few months. Transferred by Trotsky to the Caucasian Front, then menaced by Denikin's regroupment, Tukhachevsky's performance was equally swift and effective. His troops rapidly swung past Denikin's flank and

swept them into the sea at Novocherkassk and Tuapse in March 1920.

Two months later, Tukhachevsky was made Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front in the new war of the young Soviet Republic against Poland, which had invaded Russia. Upsetting international expectations, Tukhachevsky rapidly reversed fortunes in Belorussia, pushing the enemy back into ethnic Poland. After eight weeks of advance, he crossed the Bug and approached the Vistula. The Polish military dictator Pilsudski recalled the moment: 'This unceasing, worm-like advance of a huge enemy horde, which went on for weeks, with spasmodic interruptions here and there, gave us the impression of something irresistible rolling up like some terrible thunderclouds that brooked no opposition. . . . By this march on Warsaw, Tukhachevsky gave proof that he had developed into a general far above the average commonplace commander.' At twenty-seven, the same age as Napoleon at Lodi, Tukhachevsky was at the gates of Warsaw. On July 26th 1920, the architect of the Reichswehr in post-war Germany, Von Seeckt, wrote: 'The complete victory of Russia can no longer be called into question.'

From Hero to Traitor

Von Seeckt proved to be wrong. A catastrophic military blunder deprived the Soviet armies of the great victory that Lenin was predicting on an operations map to Comintern delegates in Moscow while the battle raged. The South-Western Command, under Yegorov, Budyenny and Stalin, which by previous instructions had been placed under Tukhachevsky's jurisdiction after the crossing of the Brest-Litovsk line, refused to obey orders and drive north to close in on Warsaw from below. With crass folly, it pursued an attack on Lvov to the south, opening a vast breach in the arc of the Russian offensive. This act of insubordination, in which both stupidity and jealousy on the part of Stalin and Budyenny played a role, cost the war. Pilsudski immediately poured troops into the gap between the two commands, and turned Tukhachevsky's armies on the left. A rout followed, aggravated by Tukhachevsky's cavalier treatment of supplies and transport during his impetuous advance. The Bolshevik Revolution had been contained within its borders.

On his return home, the ominous epilogues of the Civil War awaited Tukhachevsky. In May 1921 the Kronstadt garrison revolted: he was ordered to reduce it. After a lethal fratricidal struggle, the fortress was taken. A few months later, Tukhachevsky was instructed to suppress another rebellion against the Soviet regime—the Tambov peasant uprising of the summer of 1921. After these two episodes, he worked successively as Director of the Military Academy, Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff. Demoted by Voroshilov, who disliked him, he became Chief of the Operations Department of the Red Army in 1931. In this period he pioneered the use of motorized columns, tank battles and parachute drops. Under his influence, the Red Army was built into a formidable modern military machine in the thirties. Tukhachevsky, however, never lived to see the fruits of his work. Stalin probably decided to eliminate him as early as 1936; at any rate a NKVD con-

spiracy against him was woven in that year. Learning of this, the Nazi Sicherheitsdienst forged documents purporting to prove Tukhachevsky's collusion with the German High Command to betray the USSR, and passed them into Russia, with the deliberate aim of destroying the commander the Wehrmacht feared most in Russia. The forgeries were promptly used as evidence by the NKVD in secret charges against Tukhachevsky and his closest military colleagues (Yakir, Uborevitch, Putna, Gamarnik and others) for treason. On July 12th 1937, Tukhachevsky was shot. Today, he has been 'rehabilitated' in the USSR: that is, the charges of treason have been dropped and two books have now been published about him.¹ No enquiry, however, has been made into the reasons for his death and no critical discussion of his historical role has been permitted.

Nature of the Civil War

Tukhachevsky's life and work raise two major historical questions, both of contemporary political significance. The first concerns the whole character of the Russian Civil War which followed the Bolshevik seizure of power. What was its military and social nature? It is a paradox that there exists a vast and rich literature on the October Revolution itself, much of it produced by Marxists and most of it of a high scientific standard (Trotsky, Sukhanov, Deutscher, Carr, Liebman and others), while there exists virtually nothing of value on the Civil War which was its momentous consequence. Yet the first was, as Lenin always emphasized, in a sense mere 'hurrah socialism': the conquest of power was relatively easy and painless.² The real history of the ferocious class struggles which decided the destiny of the Russian Revolution began not in October 1917 but March 1918, when the Czechoslovak Legion ran up the white banner of counter-revolution along the Volga. The three terrible years of war which ensued determined the final shape of the revolution far more than its innocent and euphoric birth, twisting it into the mould that later became Stalinism.

In fact, we know very little of this decisive ordeal. The military debates of the time, in which Tukhachevsky took a prominent part, do offer, however, important clues for any consideration of the meaning of the Civil War. The different contributions to this debate all throw some light on the nature of the problems confronting the Revolution after October, when war broke out on the vast plains and steppe-lands of

¹ *Tukhachevskii, Biograficheskii Ocherk*, Lev Nikulin, Moscow 1964; *Marshal Tukhachevskii, Vospominaniya Druzei i Sotatsikov*, N. I. Kovitaky, S. M. Mednik-Tukhadoevskaya, B. N. Chustov, Moscow 1965. The former is notable for its discussion of the insubordination of Stalin at Lvov in 1920, about which it leaves no ambiguity (pp. 125-129). The latter is a collection of reminiscences by relations and colleagues; Shostakovitch is among the contributors. The volume is introduced by Marshal Meretzkov. Both books are productions of the Ministry of War Military Publishing House, and are clearly designed to serve the corporate purposes of the Red Army within present-day Soviet society. A two-volume selection of Tukhachevsky's own writings, carefully filtered, has also been published by the Ministry of War, with an introduction by Marshal Birluzov—*Izbrannye Proizvedeniya*, Moscow 1964. A French translation of sections of this was published in Paris, 1967, under the title *Essais*, with an introduction by a Gaullist General.

² Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 575-579.

Russia. Trotsky, Commissar for War and architect of the Red Army, did not believe in the existence of a distinct Marxist strategy of war. He regarded military affairs as a technical branch of knowledge, with no closer relation to politics than engineering or architecture. Thus he wrote: 'Historical materialism is by no means a universal method for all sciences . . . To attempt to apply it in the special domain of military affairs would be the greatest fallacy, no less a one than an attempt to move military science into the group of natural sciences . . . Even should one agree that "military science" is a science, it is impossible to assume that this science could be built according to the method of Marxism.'³ Trotsky's military policy was absolutely logical and consistent with this position. Early on, he made the fundamental decision to use former Czarist officers to train and lead the proletariat in arms. Regarded as the repositories of professional military knowledge, they were renamed 'military specialists' and given command of troops: throughout the Civil War they dominated the officer corps of the Red Army above the rank of captain. Trotsky defended this policy with the utmost vigour against attacks on it for opening the door to reaction and defection within the ranks of the armies of the revolution. He was upheld by Lenin. A corollary of Trotsky's classicism in military theory was his refusal to accept the widespread view of commanders at the front that the epoch of war of position (exemplified above all in the trench-systems of the First Imperialist War) was over, and that war of manoeuvre, with highly mobile thrusts and counter-thrusts, was henceforth paramount. Ironically, Gramsci was later in a famous passage to reproach Trotsky for generalizing the specifically Russian conditions of 'war of manoeuvre' as a political strategy to the quite different environment of Western Europe, where a 'war of position' (class struggle by attrition) still prevailed.⁴ The exact opposite was the case in the original military debates. Trotsky repeatedly warned his opponents of the mistake of applying the pattern of the Russian Civil War too mechanically to the advanced countries of the West. The working class, he argued, might well have to fight a civil war of position on the Seine, the Scheldt, or the Thames. Trotsky tended to see the predominance of manoeuvre over position in Russia as a sign, not of the wars of the future, but of the degree to which the conflict was locked in the past—the backward conditions of an agrarian and semi-feudal country. The rapid movements to and fro in the Civil War merely reflected the poor discipline and organization of both sides, a problem with which he was particularly preoccupied as Commissar for War. He added, presciently, that in any future war between the USSR and the West, Russia would have to adopt a defensive position in order to gain time for complete mobilization; such a war would be much more positional than the Civil War.

Proletarian Military Science

Frunze, the Bolshevik soldier and theorist who was Trotsky's successor as Commissar for War after 1922 and was perhaps the victim of a medical murder by Stalin in 1925, emerged as Trotsky's main antagonist

³ *Kak Voennoye Revolyutsia*, Vol. 3, Book 2, pp. 272-3.

⁴ *Notes and Marches*, pp. 67-68.

in the military debates, representing views much closer to those of the rank-and-file of the Red Army. His starting-point was the diametric opposite of Trotsky's. He called for a 'unified military doctrine', by which he meant the refusal of the separation established by Trotsky between Marxism and the theory of war. Frunze believed that a new proletarian science of war was necessary, which would express the social character of the working-class, as the new master of society. 'The character of the military doctrine accepted by the army of any state is determined by the character of the general political line of the social class which stands at its head,' he wrote.⁵ It was therefore incorrect to entrust the formulation of strategy to members of the former ruling class in Russia—Czarist officers who necessarily reflected the military outlook of the very enemy against which the Revolution was fighting for its life. Frunze and the 'Military Opposition' argued against the vertical hierarchy and iron discipline which Trotsky established in the Red Army: they wanted a democratized structure of command, with military commissars subordinated to political commissars, themselves elected from below, not appointed from above. Frunze went on to specify the strategic doctrine of any proletarian army. 'The tactics of the Red Army were and will be impregnated with activity in the spirit of bold and energetically conducted offensive operations. This flows from the class nature of the workers' and peasants' army and at the same time coincides with the requirements of military art.'⁶ Frunze insisted that war of manoeuvre predominated over war of position henceforward, although the latter had an important secondary role. He interpreted the Civil War as the historical lesson that fast moves across huge distances would in the future decide the outcome of major military conflicts: as a class, the working-class was supremely fitted, by temper and morale, to such mobile offensive actions. This was the fundamental reason for the Red victory in the Civil War.

Tukhachevsky's Position

Tukhachevsky occupied a third position in the military debates of the time. He agreed with Trotsky on the imperative need for classical military discipline and centralization in the Red Army, and together with Trotsky attacked the cult of anarchic partisan warfare, some of whose adepts were later to lose the Polish campaign by their insubordination and incompetence.⁷ But on the other hand he sided with Frunze and Gusev in their insistence on the new role of the offensive. 'Manoeuvre is the sole means of securing victory', he wrote.⁸ Tukhachevsky's conception of future battles reflected his experience of the fight against Kolchak and Denikin: 'Strategic reserves, the utility of which was always doubtful, we need not at all in our war. Now there is one question; how to use numbers in order to gain the maximum force of

⁵ *Izbrannye Proizvedeniya*, p. 17.

⁶ Thesis submitted to Eleventh Party Congress

⁷ It should be noted, however, that as a former lieutenant in the Czarist Army, he had great contempt for the older generation of officers, whom he qualified as badly trained, mediocre and devoid of initiative; only younger officers were genuine 'military specialists' with a modern formation, who could be entrusted with command. See *Izbrannye Proizvedeniya*, Vol. I, p. 28.

⁸ *Voenna Klassika*, p. 105.

the blow. There is one answer: release all troops in the attack, not holding in reserve a single bayonet.⁹ Trotsky and Stalin were later to accuse each other of Bonapartism, a danger that was universally feared in the Bolshevik Party. In fact, the only man who was consciously inspired by the example of Napoleon at this time was Tukhachevsky, who even modelled his addresses to his troops before battle on the style of the French general. Napoleonic military strategy had precisely been one of swift, mobile attacks of lightly-equipped armies living off the land as they marched. What Frunze believed was the *differentia specifica* of proletarian warfare, Tukhachevsky, coming from a very different background, saw as the re-emergence of the principles of revolutionary warfare, perfected by the armies of the First Consul in the tempestuous days of France's struggle with the Grand Alliance. To this, Trotsky was to retort that France in the early 19th century was the most economically and socially advanced country on the continent of Europe, and could well afford a strategy based on the supremacy of the offensive.¹⁰ Russia in the 20th century, however, was one of the most backward countries in Europe, and could not possibly emulate Napoleonic military strategy; the nascent Soviet state, on the contrary, should be guided by the Clausewitzian rule of the primacy of defence.

Coordinates of the War

What was the nature of the military conflict that gave rise to these debates? The three positions outlined above only become intelligible in the light of the Civil War itself. The armed struggle of 1918–1921 did not, contrary to popular belief, involve vast masses of men. By the standards of modern warfare, it had a markedly limited and gapped structure. Enormously destructive in its impact on economy and society (clinching the catastrophic damage already wreaked by the Imperialist War), it was fought between relatively small armies which on either side never surpassed 100,000–150,000 men on each front. No battle probably ever engaged a force of more than 50,000 men at one time—usually much less. Tukhachevsky himself emphasized this fundamental characteristic of the Civil War in a report to Lenin written in December 1919. The Civil War was defined by 'small armies', 'feeble density of units engaged', 'extended fronts', 'irregular recruitment' and a 'low technical level'. 'All these singularities', he declared, 'distinguish the Civil War from a national or imperialist war'.¹¹

Campaigns consisted of scattered, elongated attacks along railroads, often swiftly victorious and then equally swiftly repulsed. There was no depth to attack or defense on either side; supplies and support were often non-existent. Whites and Reds traded spasmodic blows across vast empty spaces, uninhabited by the standard paraphernalia of war.

⁹ Ibid, p. 55.

¹⁰ Hobebawm comments aptly on the logistics of the Napoleonic army: 'Its sketchy supply system sufficed in the rich and lootable countries where it had been developed: Belgium, North Italy and Germany. In the waste spaces of Poland and Russia, as we shall see, it collapsed.' *Age of Revolution*, p. 97.

¹¹ See *История Советской России*, Vol. 1. p. 29. In 1920 there were 5,500,000 men officially in the Red Army; of these 2,400,000 were combatants; they had between them 200,000 rifles. Ibid, Vol. 2. p. 25.

In Erickson's graphic phrase: 'The straggling fronts, with their chaotic rear, could be crumpled by a thunderbolt blow, smashing like a fist through stretched paper. Once the blow lost its momentum, however, and the forces became spread ever more thinly across a greater space, a counter-blow sent them reeling away in disorder.'¹²

What was the social basis of this armed contest? It is here that the root of the military debates within the Red Army must be sought. The Bolsheviks seized power with a minority of the country behind them: they had a 'strategic majority' (Lenin) because the Russian working class commanded overwhelming force in the main towns during October. The peasantry, ten times more numerous than the proletariat, was neutral or benevolent. But when the Civil War got under way, the Soviet régime rapidly lost most of the initial good-will it enjoyed among the peasant masses, because of the ravages of the war itself, the grip of the Entente blockade and because of the inexorable necessities of food procurement; compulsory grain deliveries were born, not with collectivization, but with war communism. Trotsky expressed the truth with brutal honesty when he later said: 'We plundered all Russia to conquer the Whites.' The result was expectable. Henceforward, the Revolution fought for its existence in a countryside ever more denuded of sympathy for it. The Whites, of course, were even more feared and hated by the mass of the middle and poor peasants: enough to ensure final military victory, but not enough to alter the political consequences of such a victory for socialism. There was no organic bond in most areas between the Red Army and the civilian population. Spontaneous guerrilla actions in Siberia at the beginning of the conflict, Trotsky remarked, played a positive role in harassing the White rear. In the Ukraine later on, where the kulak element was much more important, they disrupted both sides and acted as a 'disintegrating force' (Tukhachevsky) on the Red Army. For the Red Army itself, the 'proletarian' force which Frunze postulated for his theory, was not working class in composition. By the very end of the war, after strenuous efforts, the percentage of proletarian soldiers in it was only 15-18 per cent. The rest were peasants, mostly conscripted—confronting enemy armies also composed (much more exclusively) of peasant conscripts. Desertions from the Red Army were massive and uncontrollable throughout, a cruel index of the nature of the Civil War. In the single year of 1919 alone, there were no less than 2,846,000 deserters. Fedotoff-White, a sympathetic historian, comments: 'The fantastic number of deserters from the Red Army were beyond doubt a symptom of a deep and acute conflict between the will of the Communist-controlled state and the masses of the Russian peasantry.'¹³ Both the strategic and the social character of the Russian Civil War thus separated it profoundly from the revolutionary wars of liberation that occurred later in the century.

¹² *The Soviet High Command 1918-1941*, p. 50, London, 1962.

¹³ *The Growth of the Red Army*, p. 103, Princeton 1944. Elsewhere he writes: 'In this way the fighting units of the Red Army at the fronts of the Civil War in 1919 were actually a "thin red line" encompassing masses of parasites on army rations and hundreds of thousands, nay millions of apprehended deserters.' *The Growth of the Red Army*, p. 102.

Projected against this background, the essential flaw of Frunze's theories is evident. They presupposed political forces which did not exist. A 'proletarian' military doctrine could not emerge in Russia in 1920 because there was no proletarian Army to apply it. By contrast, Trotsky's great historical merit was his unflinching awareness of the fragile social base of the war. Precisely because it was not in this sense a people's war, it could be and had to be officered by Czarist technicians and fought on staff school lines. A 'proletarian' strategy was utopian in the desperate circumstances of 1919. Trotsky's rejection of the supremacy of manoeuvre was equally well-founded; he had no difficulty in seeing how it was common to both sides in the conflict, and reflected the ruined and improvised circumstances of backward Russia. Trotsky was a true successor of Engels, who had written: 'Nothing depends upon economic conditions so much as the army and the fleet. Aims, composition, organization, tactics and strategy are in direct dependence on the given degree of production development and the means of communication.'¹⁴ Anyone accepting this formulation must place overwhelming emphasis on the importance of technology and organization. By doing so, with unmatched energy and efficiency, Trotsky led the Soviet armies to victory in the Civil War.

Revolution from Without

Tukhachevsky's role in the military debates, still secondary during the Civil War, came to the fore immediately after it with the Polish campaign. True to his Napoleonic inspiration, he now openly advocated 'revolution from without'—the offensive proletarian war against neighbouring bourgeois states, to overthrow capitalism and install the local working class in power. Wherever a socialist revolution succeeded, it had 'as a matter of course, a natural right to expand'.¹⁵ The notion of a defensive militia rather than an offensive army was an 'antiquated superstition of the Second International', which had always confined the workers to a 'passive half-battle'. 'The Second International had inoculated the conception, that such an attack (of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie) is permissible within the frontiers of the State only.'¹⁶ What was needed now, Tukhachevsky argued, was an International General Staff of the proletarian revolution, co-ordinating external operations all over the continent.

The ancestry of these ideas was unambiguous. Napoleon's military genius had been displayed in a wave of external campaigns that carried the ideas of the bourgeois revolution across Europe, transforming political institutions and state frontiers wherever they went. In Italy, Germany and the Low Countries, French invasion was widely welcomed as liberation: Hegel and Beethoven were representative in regarding the new regimes as a historical progress. It was only when the French armies entered social terrain too dismally backward to assimilate any of the ideas of the bourgeois revolution except that of nationalism—

¹⁴ *Anti-Dühring*, p. 231.

¹⁵ *Die Rote Armee und die Militär*, Leipzig 1921, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4-5.

Spain and Russia—that they were greeted as oppressors and defeated. Viewed from within France, Bonaparte was, as Marx always emphasized, the personification of a stable and sated bourgeois class. Viewed outside France, he was still a subversive and heroic force to many Europeans. This ambiguity is reflected in later Bolshevik attitudes. It was not Robespierre or Babeuf, but Napoleon that Lenin on his deathbed, quoted to justify his actions in making the October Revolution, against Menshevik accusations that it had been premature: *On s'engage et puis on voit*.¹⁷ There was thus some precedent for Tukhachevsky's orientation.

For there was, in the Bolshevik Party, a firm tradition that legitimized offensive wars by a proletarian state against a neighbouring bourgeois state, for the purpose of helping a fraternal working class in its revolution. Lenin had written in 1914: 'Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism. Hence, the victory of socialism is possible first in several or even in one capitalist country alone. After expropriating the capitalists and organizing their own socialist production, the victorious proletariat of that country will arise *against* the rest of the world—the capitalist world—attracting to its cause the oppressed classes of other countries, stirring uprisings in those countries against the capitalists, and in case of need using even armed force against the exploiting classes and their states.'¹⁸ Trotsky reiterated these principles in 1921: 'In principle, the Soviet government would always be for an offensive revolutionary war under conditions when such a war could lead to the liberation of the toiling classes in other countries.'¹⁹

There was thus a certain canonical background to Tukhachevsky's doctrine. There was also a powerful counter-revolutionary foreground, as will be seen. Besides intervening in Russia itself, imperialism had after the October Revolution swiftly moved to crush further uprisings with foreign armies, and had succeeded in three important cases. The beleaguered Hungarian Commune had been destroyed by an invading Rumanian army; bourgeois power was stabilized in Budapest for 25 years. The Finnish Revolution, holding off the White Guards in the north, had been caught in the rear by the landing of the German Army of Von der Goltz, and crushed. In the East, the Gilan Republic on the Caspian was overthrown by a British-controlled and officered army of Persian mercenaries. In each case, the Soviet state was unable to come to the aid of a fraternal revolution and had helplessly to watch it defeated not by internal forces, but by external intervention. Lenin, in particular, had bitterly lamented the failure to aid the Hungarian Commune in 1919.²⁰ In this context, Tukhachevsky's ideas could be seen as a logical

¹⁷ *Selected Works* Vol. 3, p. 823.

¹⁸ *Selected Works* Vol. 1, p. 671.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*

²⁰ In March-April 1919, Lenin cabled Rakovsky, Political Commissar with the Ukrainian Red Army, with repeated and urgent instructions to attack across the Carpathians for a juncture with the Hungarian Red Army. The tides of war prevented this link from ever being achieved—by June the Polish and Rumanian armies had met and blocked the route. But it was a close thing. A precarious air link seems to have been established from Budapest to Vinnitsa in the Ukraine, enabling Szammlary to confer with Lenin in Moscow during May.

riposte to 'counter-revolution from without', in the new situation created by the end of the Civil War in Russia.

The Polish Campaign

Pilsudski's annexationist aggression of 1920 provided a natural spring-board for a counter-attack. When the Red Army crossed the Bug into Poland, the immediate objective was the liberation of Warsaw and of the Polish working class. The Bolsheviks had reasonable grounds for believing that the Polish proletariat was revolutionary and socialist, and would unite with them to fight the colonels' clique of Pilsudski and Smygly-Rydz. The General Strike of 1905 had lasted longer in Warsaw than anywhere else in the Russian Empire; Soviets had sprung up in 1918; there was the tradition of Luxemburg and Tizska. Beyond Poland, moreover, lay Germany—the 'key to the international situation' as Trotsky was later to call it. Gripped by insurrection and civil war, it was in a quasi-revolutionary situation. The Spartakist uprising had been suppressed by the Freikorps from the Baltic; perhaps its successor could be saved by another army from the East, the Red cavalry? In 1920, every Bolshevik believed that the future of the Russian Revolution depended on revolution in the West—so motives both of international solidarity and of self-defence seemed to justify the advance of the Red Army beyond Russian borders. Lenin summed them up when he said that the Polish campaign would be a blow against the whole Versailles system²¹—the internationally co-ordinated blockade of socialism in Russia, and suppression of it in Western and Central Europe.

Trotsky alone opposed the march into Poland, and warned of its dangers. Here again, he showed his clairvoyant appreciation of the limits of the Russian Revolution. Polish nationalism, he argued, was an elemental force which would be aroused by a Russian army, no matter what its colours, on Polish soil—just as Russian chauvinism had been by the invasion of Polish armies a few months before. Not only this. More fundamentally, Trotsky reminded the Bolsheviks that the Red Army was overwhelmingly a peasant force, with a low level of political education, which could not be used at will for dashes across Europe. The peasant soldiers who composed it would not fight with any enthusiasm outside their own frontiers. 'With such tactics' Trotsky wrote 'we shall not be able to capture the peasant's soul'.²² The Red Army was not designed to conquer Brussels or Galicia. On the contrary, only a defensive military policy was possible for Russia, with its retrograde economy and non-socialist peasantry.

Defeat on the Vistula

In the event, Trotsky was proved right. The German working class, which had no revolutionary traditions before the First World War, was radicalized by defeat and made repeated insurrectionary bids after the war. The Polish working class followed the inverse evolution. After a

²¹ See his speech of October 2, 1920.

²² *Kak Vostorgalas Revolution*, Vol 3, Book 2, p. 247.

long history of revolutionary upsurges, it was demobilized by the war and emergence of a Polish state under the protection of the Versailles Treaty. There was no popular response to the call of the Soviet armies to rise up against Pilsudski.²³ The military defeat of the Polish campaign was avoidable: the political defeat of the conception behind it was not. Tukhachevsky's later theorization of this was quite explicit: 'The working class may not always be ready for the helping hand extended towards it. It may still need time to look around and realize where its salvation lies. In short, a socialist offensive will not always turn out to be concerted with a revolutionary uprising of the nation concerned.'²⁴ In other words, the role of the Red Army was no longer that of merely assisting an indigenous insurrection under attack, it was to initiate and if necessary replace it. Trotsky saw the distinction very clearly. He emphasised that; 'In the great class war now taking place, military intervention from without can play but a *concomitant, co-operative, secondary part*. Military intervention may hasten the dénouement and make the victory easier, but only when the political consciousness and the social conditions are ripe for revolution.'²⁵

This principle, as Deutscher points out in his classic analysis of the campaign, was precisely what was ignored by Tukhachevsky.²⁶ Frunze had tried to escape from the constraining limits of the Civil War experience by imagining a Marxist strategy of the future. Tukhachevsky also tried to escape from them, but by returning to the past. What he did not grasp, of course, was the fundamental *difference in nature* between the bourgeois and socialist revolutions. Napoleon could for a time successfully export the ideas of 1789 on his bayonets, because the political transformations of society implied by the bourgeois revolution do not ipso facto demand mass participation from below. They can—as later historical experience in Germany, Japan or Italy was amply to testify—be implanted bureaucratically and repressively, by a small oligarchy from above. By contrast, the socialist revolution is by definition only socialist if it involves the masses of the population taking

²³ Workers' councils had sprung up in Warsaw and Lublin in 1918, and were initially dominated by the reformist and nationalist Polish Socialist Party, much as were the Workers' Councils in Germany by the SPD. But by 1919, the newly created Communist Party of Poland had won a virtual majority in the elections to the Councils in Warsaw, Lodz and other towns. The party was driven underground thereafter. The combativity of the Polish proletariat was, in fact, crippled by its fate during the Imperialist War, when 600,000 Polish workers were transported to Germany and 1,000,000 to Russia, for military industries on each side. It had been physically dispersed. This disaster was compounded by the symmetrical, voluntary absence of its best revolutionary leadership in the same two countries, Luxemburg and Thälker in Germany, Radek, Hanecki and Dziedziński in Russia: consequence of a tradition which later Polish Marxists were to criticise as 'national nihilism'. Finally, it should be said that Marchlewski, leader of the Polish Revolutionary Committee which accompanied the Soviet armies into Poland, committed the fundamental error of proclaiming collectivization of land, not its distribution to the peasants—the same blunder Kun had made in Hungary, which had the same consequences. The combination of these three factors was probably at least as important as the question of Polish nationalism in determining the consciousness of Polish workers and peasants in 1920.

²⁴ 'Revolution from Without', see below.

²⁵ Op. cit.

²⁶ Deutscher's account in *The Prophet Armed* is far the best of this whole crisis: it is a model of Marxist analysis.

their life into their own hands and overthrowing existing society from top to bottom by themselves. No proletarian version of the Italian campaign was ever possible in the 20th century.

After the Second World War, Stalin imposed a bureaucratic 'revolution from without'—now historically divorced from its origins in the Leninist period—throughout Eastern Europe, with notorious results. These unnatural creations were at least by-products of victory over Nazi aggression and defence against the threat of Anglo-American encroachments. The ultimate debasement of the once generous traditions of the Red Army was the return of a Soviet *kommandatura* in Prague 20 years later, no longer to drive out the Germans, but simply to suppress the Czechs: reaction from without.

The Basis for a People's War

To situate the triangular military and political debates at the birth of the Red Army historically, a comparison may be fruitful. Engels, it will be remembered, had emphasized that: 'Aims, composition, organization, tactics and strategy are in direct dependence on the given degree of production development and the means of communication.' The defect of Engels's formulation, obviously, is its reduction of the material determinants of war to the forces of production, conceived as technology. What is missing are the *relations* of production. Hence his famous misjudgment that artillery and shrapnel had rendered barricades outdated and urban insurrections henceforward impossible. The social relations for a new kind of war were absent in Russia after October; there was nothing to do but to fall back on traditional schemes. It was precisely the creation of new social relations that made possible a completely new form of warfare—revolutionary in every sense—in China 10 years later. The Red Army led by Mao learnt to 'swim with measured strokes in the ocean of war'²⁷ because the element in which they moved and from which they could never be separated was the social class that formed the overwhelming majority of the nation, the Chinese peasantry. The 'protracted war' which was born in the Hunan-Kiangsi Soviet in 1929 grew over 20 years of uninterrupted military struggle, that was indivisibly a political and social struggle, at every step. The scale of mass involvement produced by this tremendous experience dwarfed that of the Russian Civil War. As early as 1930, Mao had 300,000 men under arms in the small border zone of Hunan-Kiangsi. During 1945–49, the climax to the civil war, the contending armies of the CCP and KMT numbered between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000. Lin Biao besieged Peking alone with 800,000 men. The historical result of this massive popular epic was what had eluded all the participants in the Russian debates of the twenties: a Marxist strategy that theorized a new form of military conflict—the people's protracted war. The thought of Mao Tse Tung unified politics and war into a quite new theory of revolutionary practice, founded on its own epistemology, as André Glucksmann has recently shown in *Le Discours de la Guerre*.²⁸ The condition of

²⁷ Mao Tse-Tung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 191.

²⁸ For a discussion of this crucial book, see NLR 49, with a translation of a chapter, 'Politics and War in the Thought of Mao Tse Tung'.

possibility of this renovation of military science by historical materialism (which Trotsky had thought impossible and indeed was impossible in his day), was the political unity of the People's Liberation Army and the Chinese masses, expressed most limpidly in Lin's Three Rules of Discipline and Eight Points of Discipline of 1929. The record of the Chinese Revolution, replete with its own mistakes and limitations like all historical endeavours, should not be idealized. But it is clear that it was this unity which produced the 'unified doctrine' of which Frunze had dreamed in vain.

Indeed, it is notable that Frunze's strategic ideas, such as the necessity for all all-out attack, were the contrary of the classical rules of the people's protracted war. They were rather an early version of the forward and offensive military line advocated (against Mao's advice), by Ch'in Pang Hsien and Wang Ming in China from 1931-33, under the slogans 'Don't Let our Pots and Pans be Smashed', 'Attack on All Fronts' and 'Pit One against Ten, Pit Ten against a Hundred'. Ch'in and Wang also claimed that this was a 'completely Marxist' military strategy. In fact, as Mao later pointed out, it was foolish adventurism, and was ultimately responsible for the disaster of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign, when Von Seeckt's blockhouses nearly succeeded in wiping out the Red Army, precipitating the retreat from the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area. The Long March triumphed because it was its strategic antithesis.

If the experience of the People's Liberation Army in China left behind the dilemmas of Trotsky and Frunze, it also provided a practical criticism of the ideas of Tukhachevsky. The Chinese Revolution, too, had its 1920 campaign, but it was fought with a significant difference. When Indian troops crossed the NEFA border in 1962, as the Polish *soldatska* had once marched into the Ukraine, the response was immediate and devastating. The PLA routed the Indian attack in a week, and, traversing impossible terrain, thrust deep into Assam. Like Warsaw, Calcutta—the revolutionary capital of India—lay beyond. The 'people's protracted war' is not Napoleonic, however. It is based on the supremacy of defence, and finds its strength in the creative energy of the masses. The PLA, having inflicted drastic punishment on the demoralized Indian army, promptly and voluntarily withdrew. Today, red flags are fluttering in villages of Bengal, while in Bohemia Soviet troops guard a sullen population.

Second World War

The second great historical question raised by the enigmatic ellipse of Tukhachevsky's life concerns the performance of the Soviet armies during the Second World War. From the late twenties onwards, Tukhachevsky devoted himself to the construction of a mechanized and industrialized army: the danger of a second imperialist intervention was by now obvious, with the rise of fascism in Europe. In the latter half of his life, Tukhachevsky abandoned the preconceptions of his Civil War experience—the priority of attack over defence, and the supersession of position by manoeuvre. The technical changes introduced by the rise of mechanized units—absent from the Civil War,

apart from the now anachronistic use of armoured trains—had transformed the strategic problems of conventional warfare. In his article *War as a Problem of Armed Struggle* (1928), Tukhachevsky laid down with extraordinary precision the main lines of the pattern of the Second World War. He emphasized the importance of diplomatic initiatives to divide the capitalist enemy; he predicted that trench warfare would play no role in future conflicts: he criticized unilateral insistence on attack/manoeuvre, and argued that positional and defensive warfare would be equally important; finally, he attributed great importance to the skilful use of tanks, but made it clear that they should not be fetishized in isolation from other elements in a general strategy (Fullerism/Blitzkrieg), and must be combined with infantry units for optimum effect.²⁹

Two years later, Tukhachevsky was Chief of the Operations Department of the Red Army. He swiftly formed the first mechanized brigade in 1930 (tanks and armoured cars), and then experimented with the first parachute units in 1931. According to one source, he envisaged assistance to a possible proletarian uprising in Germany, to be aided by dropping parachutists behind enemy lines into the Ruhr, Lower Saxony and Prussia. This idea was a return to a genuinely Leninist conception, and in fact was realized by both Allied and Soviet armies in the Second World War, in their liaison with Resistance movements in the Balkans. Tukhachevsky's next innovation was the development of what he called 'concentric manoeuvre' or double envelopment by means of a breakthrough of enemy lines with mobile formations, which he practised in vast military exercises in 1933.³⁰ The foreign military attachés who watched these exercises noticed that their tactical conception was in advance of the ability of the troops to execute them. Eight years later, it was 'concentric manoeuvre' that trapped Von Paulus at Stalingrad. It is by no means far-fetched to claim that many of the great encirclement operations of the Second World War, such as the battles of Stalingrad and Korsun-Shevchenkivski in 1944, owed their conception to the experiments which Tukhachevsky and his group carried out on the plains of Belorussia and the Ukraine from 1931 onwards.³¹

Within the framework of untransformed social relations of war, Tukhachevsky in the thirties developed perhaps the most advanced tactical conceptions anywhere in the world. If any one man was responsible for the eventual field victory of the Red Army over the Wehrmacht, it was doubtless him. The final question-mark of his career concerns the events that led up to the Russo-German war of 1941. Since the Rapallo Pact of 1922, the armies of the two countries had trained together in special bases inside the USSR, which included a tank and aviation school. Tukhachevsky visited Germany in 1932, the year

²⁹ This article is included in the second volume of the *Izbrannyye Proizvedeniya* (1964).

³⁰ Tukhachevsky first used the concept in *Voenna Klassika* (1922), p. 106.

³¹ *Juggernaut, the Russian Forces 1918-1966*, p. 71, Malcolm Mackintosh, New York 1967.

before Hitler won power. Some reports claim that he and Gamarnik asked Stalin to close down the training stations immediately after Hitler became Chancellor. Others imply that he regretted the end of technical co-operation between the two armies. At all events, the bases were shut in October 1933. Thereafter, Tukhachevsky made only one major utterance on international affairs—a long military article in *Pravda* of March 31st 1935, whose dire warning of the dangers of Nazi aggression was prophetic. A year later, Tukhachevsky was already under suspicion, and shortly thereafter he was shot. The cynical collusion between the NKVD and the Sicherheitsdienst that was responsible for his death, in which the former were into the bargain the unconscious dupes of the latter, anticipated the Nazi-Soviet Pact signed two years afterwards. The purge of the generals proved to be, exactly as the SD hoped, a crippling blow at the war capability of the Red Army. The catastrophe of June–October 1941, in which the USSR was caught completely unawares by the German invasion, losing millions of men and the results of years of industrial construction, must be overwhelmingly attributed to the disappearance of any experienced military command after 1937. It was more than a blunder; it was a crime. The responsibility for the disaster is so great that it remains to this day a forbidden topic in the Soviet Union. The full enormity of Stalin's blindness and incapacity has probably not yet been revealed. The dubious anecdotes of Khrushchev's Secret Speech merely served to obscure the true gravamen against the 'Generalissimo'.

It is enough to say that, contrary to popular legend, the Wehrmacht at no time had military superiority over the Soviet armies on the frontier. The exact opposite was the case. The Red Army deployed in forward positions outnumbered the German forces on the Eastern Front by 30 divisions in June 1941. Not only this. The Red Army had a staggering *seven to one* superiority in tanks, supposedly the decisive weapon of the Wehrmacht: its tank park numbered 24,600 to approximately 3,500 Panzers ranged against it. Even in the air, the USSR had a four to one superiority in planes over the Luftwaffe.³² There is thus no basis for the myth that German armoured might was initially able to smash through the Russian defences, at crushing odds, and was only finally stopped when total popular mobilization was able to redress the balance at Moscow and Stalingrad. The German conquests of 1941 were strictly *military* victories, won by skill and surprise over a larger opponent ruined by an incompetent and demoralized command, committing blunder after blunder. Stalin's personal responsibility for this debacle was manifold: he had destroyed the officers corps of the Red Army dismantled the 1939 defence positions, refused to believe in a German attack after repeated warnings, and neglected to place Soviet industry on a war alert.³³

³² *The Soviet High Command*, p. 584. Some of the Soviet armour and aircraft were ageing by 1941, but this was due to Stalin's refusal to mobilize the war industry after the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

³³ Erickson's discussion is cool and lucid. New evidence has since come to light. The Soviet historian Pierre Yakir, son of Tukhachevsky's colleague, has recently stressed the demolition of the 1939 defence lines, when the Soviet frontier was moved up to incorporate the Baltic States and Eastern Poland.

The Second World War was eventually won, not by superior military skill—after Tukhachevsky, the Red Army produced no outstanding generals, merely average ones; nor by the bond between a revolutionary army and its mass base—desertion to the Germans numbered tens of thousands; but by the economic and social weight of the USSR after the Five Year Plans, which was fatally underestimated by German intelligence. The Wehrmacht went on winning until this enormous machine was finally organized for war with reasonable rationality; it was then slowly pushed back, under the banner of nationalism. The delayed victory saved Europe from fascism: the cost was colossal. It has still to be computed how much of it was unnecessary; a day of reckoning in the USSR, here as elsewhere, will not be postponed for ever. The door to the future can only be unlocked by the past.

Acknowledgement

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Revolution from Without

The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie must eventually result in the seizure of State power by the proletariat. One would naturally expect this to take place independently in each individual State, and Marx has pointed out that 'in form, if not in essence, the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is primarily a national struggle. The proletariat of every country will abolish its own bourgeoisie.' However, the matter cannot always be resolved so favourably. The immense strength contained in the State power of the bourgeoisie, the scant probability of a simultaneous revolutionary socialist outburst in several countries at once, and finally the experience the bourgeoisie has gained in its struggle with the working class, force one to acknowledge that a country where the proletariat has taken power into its own hands may for some time remain an isolated socialist island amidst a surrounding sea of bourgeois states.

The outbreak of a socialist revolution in one State will inevitably produce an intensification of bourgeois dictatorship in neighbouring States, and the State where the proletariat has rebelled will immediately become the target for the thunderbolts of the entire bourgeois world. Such conditions give birth to civil

war. This initially breaks out on a national scale, although the overthrown bourgeoisie does also receive support for its counter-revolutionary struggle from the world bourgeoisie. The civil war outgrows its national dimensions and develops into a major international class war, as the bourgeois world grows convinced that the defeated bourgeoisie of the country concerned is unable to recover State power; convinced too that the dictatorship of the proletariat, as it consolidates its position, is by its very existence becoming a threat to the tranquillity of world capital.

Thus, from the moment of insurrection, the proletariat joins battle not only with its own bourgeoisie, but also—unequally matched—with the bourgeoisie of the entire world. Thus, as it develops, the struggle between the working class and the bourgeois class ceases to be purely domestic one, and becomes an international war in which the proletariat cannot restrict itself to a passive role. An attack by a working class revolutionary army over the boundaries of a neighbouring bourgeois State can overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie there, and transfer dictatorship into the hands of the proletariat.

The Seizure of Power

In general, the seizure of power in a bourgeois country can take place in two ways; firstly by means of a revolutionary uprising of the working class within that country, and secondly by means of armed action on the part of a neighbouring proletarian State. The aim in both these cases is identical—to bring about a socialist revolution. That is why naturally, they should be considered of equal value, for the workers of all countries.

The basic precondition for the successful seizure of power lies in the readiness of the masses for such a revolutionary take-over. The two determining factors here are the level of development attained by the working class, and—even more important—the hopelessness of all other methods. Hatred divides the workers and the bourgeoisie into two irreconcilable classes, which can no longer avoid a bloody conflict. This awareness of who their class enemies are, together with a consciousness of class solidarity with the workers of the entire world, are the main factors preparing the ground for socialist revolution. A revolution runs into major obstacles if the class instinct of the proletariat is dulled by petit-bourgeois nationalism.

The Growth of Internal Revolution

A socialist revolution begins with the seizure of power. Power, once seized, can only be permanently held if the proletariat is already fully prepared for revolution, or else capable of becoming quickly revolutionized and thus of supporting its more audacious and better prepared vanguard. From this point of view, a revolution within a given State has great advantages; beginning most frequently with the seizure of power in the capital, it then spreads out and penetrates deeper into the working masses.

This growth of the revolution, its introduction among the working masses, is an absolute precondition for the success of the communist movement. The encroachment upon a bourgeois system, established over decades and centuries, cannot succeed if the revolution does not stir up the main body of the working people. Only a general revolutionary upheaval, flaring up with the bright light of revolutionary spirit, can create the offensive movement, unrestrainable in its impetuosity and courage, that is necessary for the destruction of the older order and the creation of the new.

After the working-class vanguard has seized power, it must be supported by the broad masses. First it establishes an armed proletarian force, and this small nucleus can quickly attract revolutionary volunteers, creating a powerful working-class army. Thus, a revolution that follows the normal pattern begins with the capture of power and, gradually establishing itself firmly among the working classes, creates both the forms of a new system and an armed force to defend and intensify the revolution.

The creation of a Red Army is accomplished with great difficulties. The continuous struggle with internal counter-revolution and subsequently with the henchmen of external counter-revolution affords it no opportunity to build itself up in peace, but forces its young, untrained troops to be squandered uselessly. The bourgeoisie has ready a well-trained and well-equipped army with an experienced officer corps.

Let us now look at the struggle between these two armies. The process of civil war entrenches the revolution as no other does. Class hostility reaches its height. Although civil strife is destructive and exhausting, it does nevertheless quicken the pace of revolution.

External Revolution

But in the case of an offensive socialist war, which represents one particular form of a defensive strategy along internal lines of operation, this is how the revolution develops. First of all, the seizure of power cannot be accomplished straight away. For this, the bourgeois State army must be routed and destroyed and a significant portion of territory conquered. This is not easy in any circumstances, and is made considerably more complicated by the national question.

Skilful counter-revolutionary agitation, where the revolutionary spirit of the workers is weak, can easily wreck the hopes of a socialist revolution. Therefore a socialist offensive must be accompanied by the same growth of the revolutionary masses as there is in the case of an internal uprising. Indeed, by an even greater one, since an attacking revolutionary army is involved in continuous fighting and operations, and is therefore continually decreasing in numbers. A socialist revolution demands a constant increase in its military strength, for the old world puts up massive and increasingly bitter resistance.

Thus, in order to fulfill its very purpose as a revolution from without, a socialist offensive must be accompanied by a continuous enlargement

of its forces from local revolutionary sources. If this is fully understood, the armed troops of the proletariat will always take an identical line of action, whatever their nationality and in whatever State they may be operating.

In both cases—i.e. whether against an internal or an external bourgeoisie—this revolutionary socialist war is developed and sustained by the local revolutionary masses. With this kind of support, which allows the rebel masses extensive freedom of movement, the revolution spreads swiftly. The class war is sharpened and penetrates into every corner of national life; once there, the spark of revolution blazes up, and that conditions spontaneously ensue which favour the entire mass revolutionary movement. This mighty revolutionary maestro creates the conditions in which the successful completion of a socialist revolution is possible.

Revolution from within and revolution from without are of absolutely equal value as far as their significance for the liberation of the proletariat is concerned; they do nevertheless differ in the attitude shown towards them by the less conscious sectors of the masses. A revolution from within that overthrows its own bourgeoisie can be seen to be a national affair; but if the working class in a given State is insufficiently prepared, a revolution from without can easily be used by the bourgeoisie to arouse chauvinistic self-defence against the 'imperialist invasion'.

The Armed Strength of a Revolution

We have already discussed the significance that armed strength has for revolution. One side—the bourgeoisie—possesses a regular, well-trained and well-equipped army, whose commanding officers are firmly attached to the bourgeois class and, like it, accustomed to hate any proletarian movement whole-heartedly. On the other side, the workers' army is just coming into existence, an army which has to be created from nothing, having neither officers, arms nor equipment.

The position of this army of peasants and workers, during the period of its formation, is so difficult that if the bourgeoisie is ready to strike back and to take quick, decisive action, the worker's insurrection can be easily suppressed. But should the bourgeoisie delay, the worker will set their army on its feet with lightning speed; in short, if there is a basis for protracted civil war little by little all the advantages will swing over decisively to the side of the revolution.

Where does the strength of the bourgeois army lie in fact? It lies in its size, in its general staff, and also in the fact that it has been disciplined and trained over decades. However, the masses that make up the rank of this army are by no means reliable. They consist of peasants and workers, who can only be kept obedient by the rule of the whip and by the crudest propaganda. As the war drags on and the difficulties and inevitable burdens increase, the eyes of the ignorant mass of soldiers begin to open; at that point the bourgeois army becomes dangerous to the bourgeoisie. At its first reversal it begins to go to pieces, and the

correlation of the forces of the Red and White armies starts to change sharply in favour of the Red army. This does not happen only because the White Guard Army disintegrates—that is only a small part of it. It is the added fact that the ranks of the Red Army are swollen by workers and peasants deserting the bourgeois camp which changes this correlation so sharply. This is the most remarkable and the most characteristic feature of civil war.

Thus, provided its forces are exerted to the full, the proletariat alone can win a civil war, and the longer the war the greater its chances of success. The same applies to an external war between proletarian and bourgeois States—though there are some preliminary qualifications to be made here.

In the first place, the period during which the White army maintains its cohesion may be significantly longer, for there are national prejudices, and sometimes religious ones too, which have first to be overcome. In the second place, the working class may not always be ready for the helping hand extended towards it. It may still need time to look around and realize where its salvation lies. In short, a socialist offensive will not always turn out to be concerted with a revolutionary uprising of the nation concerned.

However, there are no grounds for supposing that the workers and peasants will not realize where their own interests lie in this bloody conflict into which they are thrust by the bourgeoisie against the proletarian liberators of the neighbouring State. Once again, their endurance and the prolongation of the war will come to the aid of the working class. The reinforcement of the Red Army takes place not only at the expense of the bourgeois army, but comes too from the local population and its working classes. If revolutionary demoralization affects the bourgeois system during this period of the war, it will immediately begin to collapse, and then the Red Army will find great strength and great resources as it advances. The labouring classes will respond to the mobilization proclaimed by the working class on the march, by a mass influx beneath the Red banners.

This power of the Red Army to spread the revolution as it advances, and to draw limitless new strength from the revolutionary masses of all nationalities and peoples, creates exceptional possibilities for a socialist, class strategy. It can in all confidence consider itself the future conqueror of world capital. It is thus quite impossible to separate the concept of class strategy from the theory of revolution in general. The two coincide. Within the sphere of general revolutionary theory, class strategy analyses the sphere of its practical application to revolution by armed force, and the possibility of extending the revolution by arming the working class.

If we look now at the quality of the Red Army, we will see that in the case of a revolution from without, the Red Army will find itself in considerably better conditions than in the case of an internal revolution. We have already pointed out the difficulties encountered by an insurgent working class in creating its own army. But a working class

attacking beyond its State frontiers must necessarily be prepared in this respect, so that, provided the offensive from outside is correctly calculated, the issue of armed strength stands far more favourably to the working class.

Initial Conditions for a Socialist War

The above-mentioned special features in the waging of an external class war make it necessary to consider it with very great care and attention. Before all else, one must weigh up to what extent the workers and peasants are prepared for the advent of the Red liberators. This is a difficult problem, and one which can only too easily lead to disaster. This problem is resolved favourably, it follows that one must act without any delay with such forces as one has. Once the initial success has been gained, then internal revolution will play its part within the enemy army and smash it to pieces.

However, if the signs are not favourable the matter will have to be very carefully considered indeed. As we have already shown, success in the conduct of such a war is by no means impossible; on the contrary, we have seen that in the long run persistence on the socialists' part will inevitably lead to a prolonged struggle, and this in turn will entail the revolutionary disintegration of the bourgeois system. But even with the promise of success as the final outcome, a prolonged civil war will call for enormous military and other resources.

One must allow both for victories and for defeats; one must think about equipment and provisions; and one must consider the problem of recruitment from the home front—a problem which is not always a common one, at least in its full dimensions, in a civil war. Finally, the general resources of the State must be taken into account, and its capacity for a protracted, stubborn war that will spare neither its strength nor its resources. For once the decision to wage war has been taken, it must be waged to the end, to the final goal—victory.

Preparation for an External Class War

It is clear from all that has been said that an external class war requires great preparation in terms of strength and resources. Provision must be made in advance for the war's possible prolonged duration, and appropriate resources for such a period must be amassed. Moreover, preparation for such a war must not only be undertaken within the socialist State, but—most important of all—must also be carefully carried out within the bourgeois State which is to be attacked. This means communist work to educate the working class in the spirit of mutual aid, by developing an international proletarian strategic motto: 'Take Up Arms'. It is a universal rule that such work must be carried out.

When preparations are being made for any given war, communist activity is needed to give these a practical character, to prepare the working masses for the idea of revolution from without. If the idea of external support from a neighbouring working class penetrates deep into the consciousness of the workers, then they will prepare themselves.